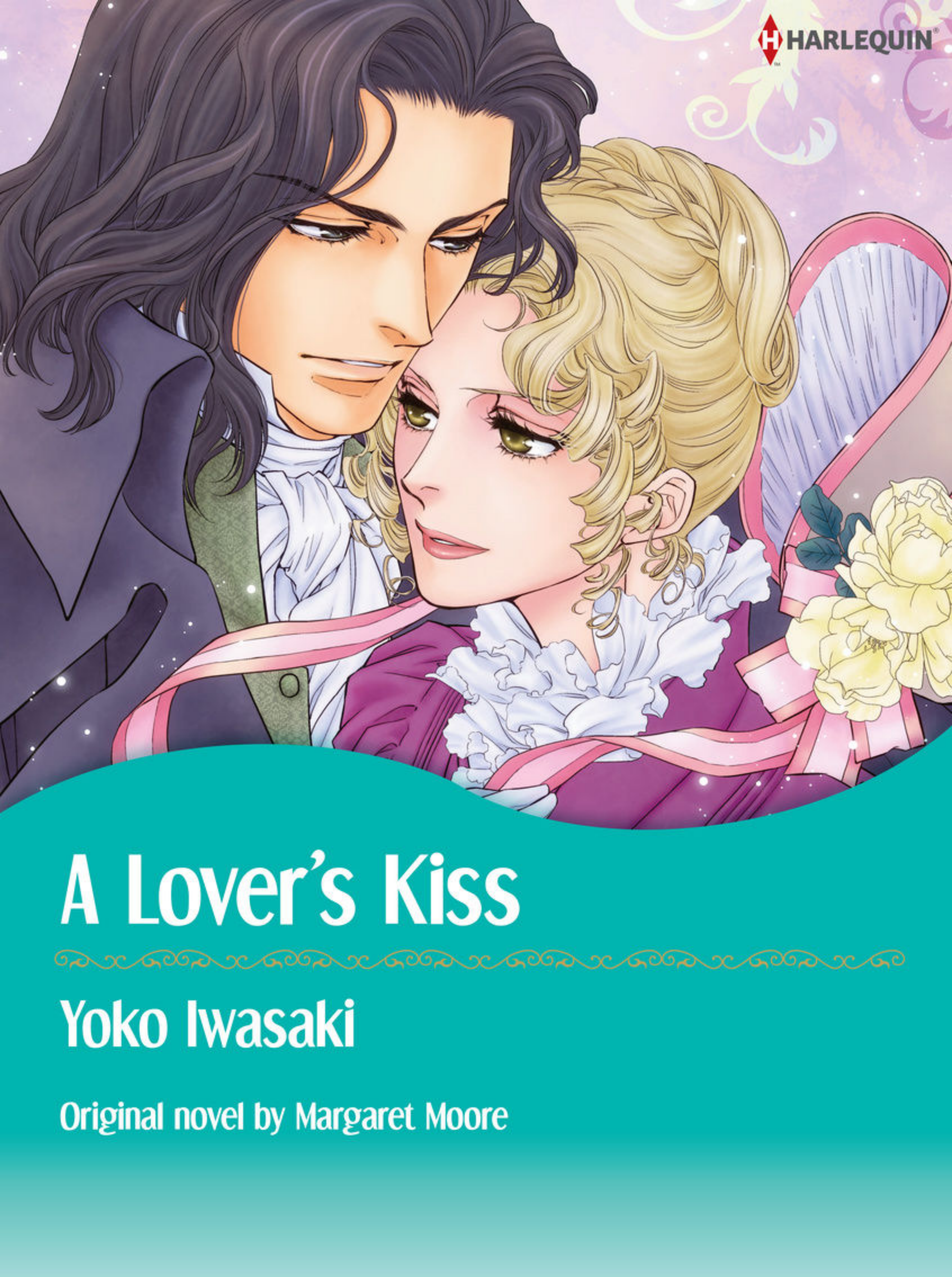
HARLEQUIN



A Lover's Kiss

Yoko Iwasaki

Original novel by Margaret Moore

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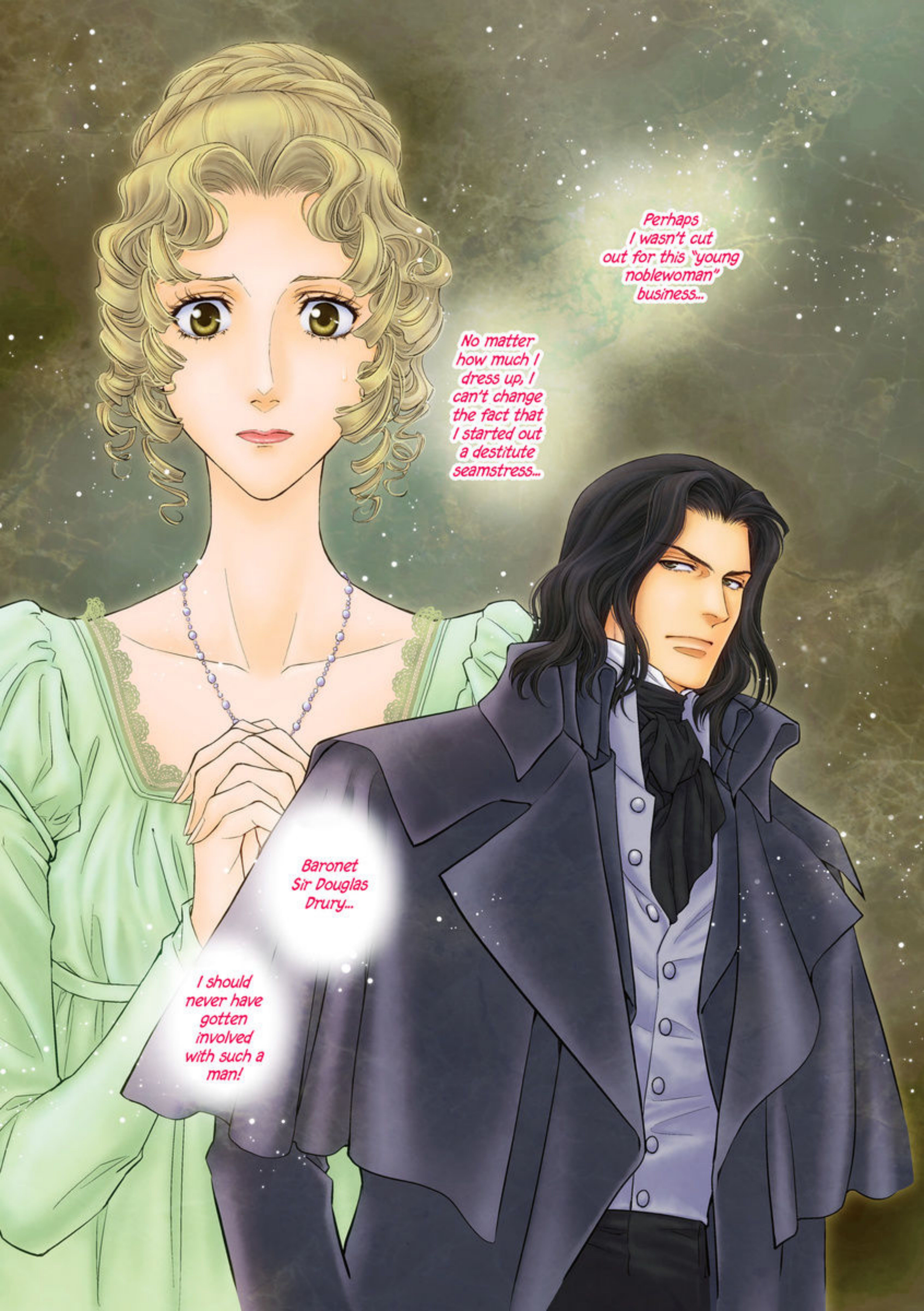

Perhaps I wasn't cut out for this "young noblewoman" business...
No matter how much I dress up, I can't change the fact that I started out a destitute seamstress...
Baronet Sir Douglas Drury...
I should never have gotten involved with such a man!

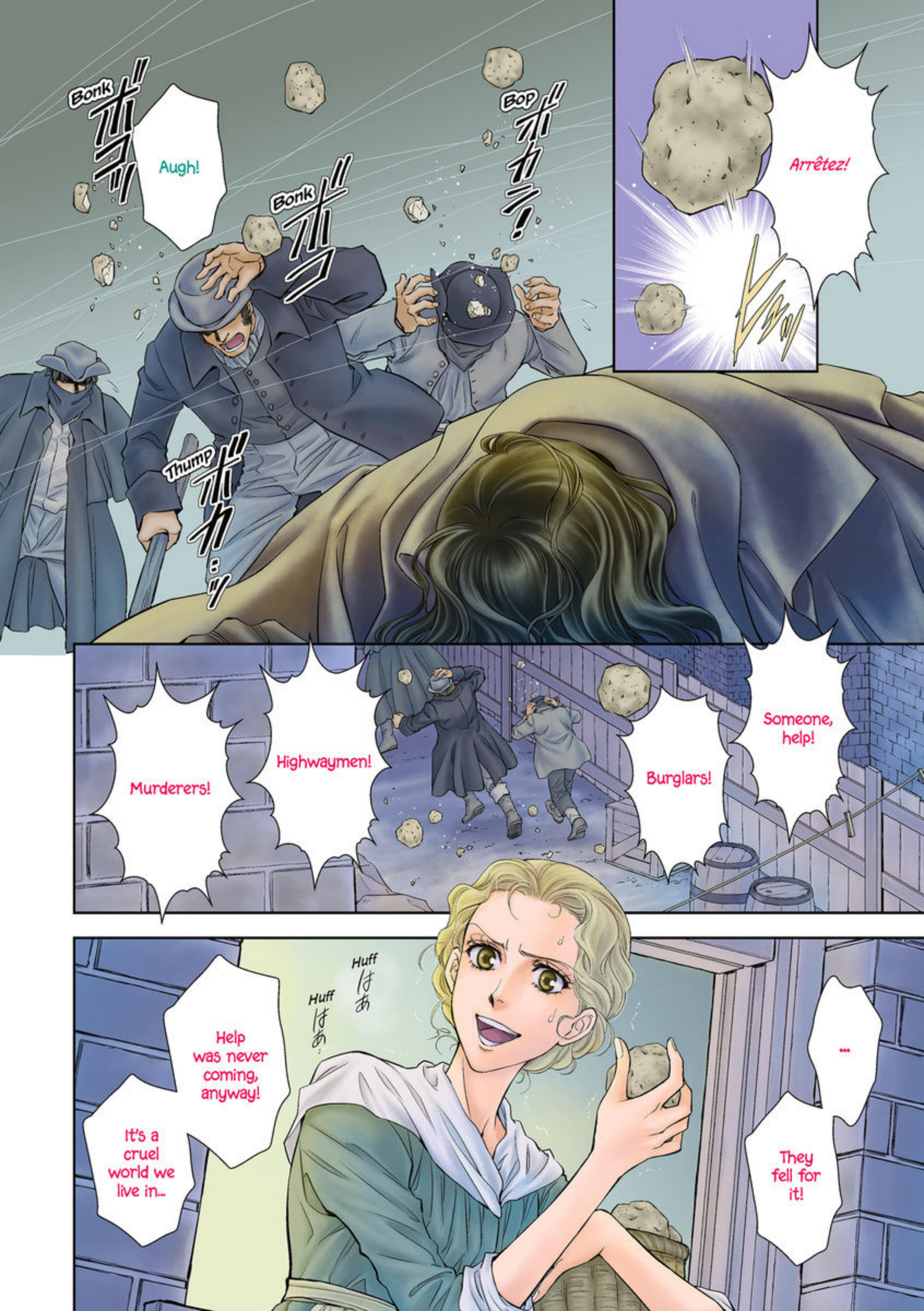
あのキスの記憶

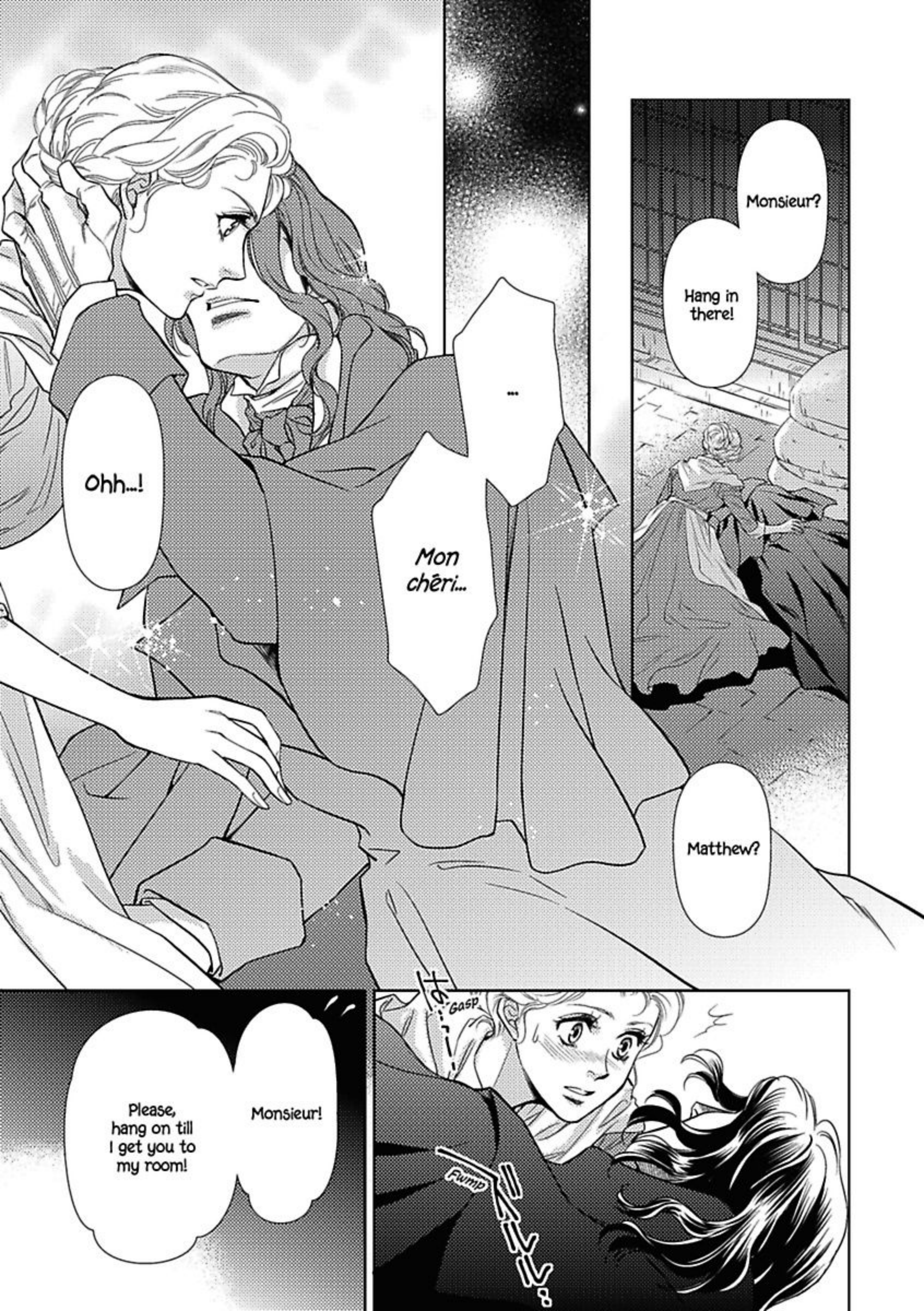
A Lover's Kiss

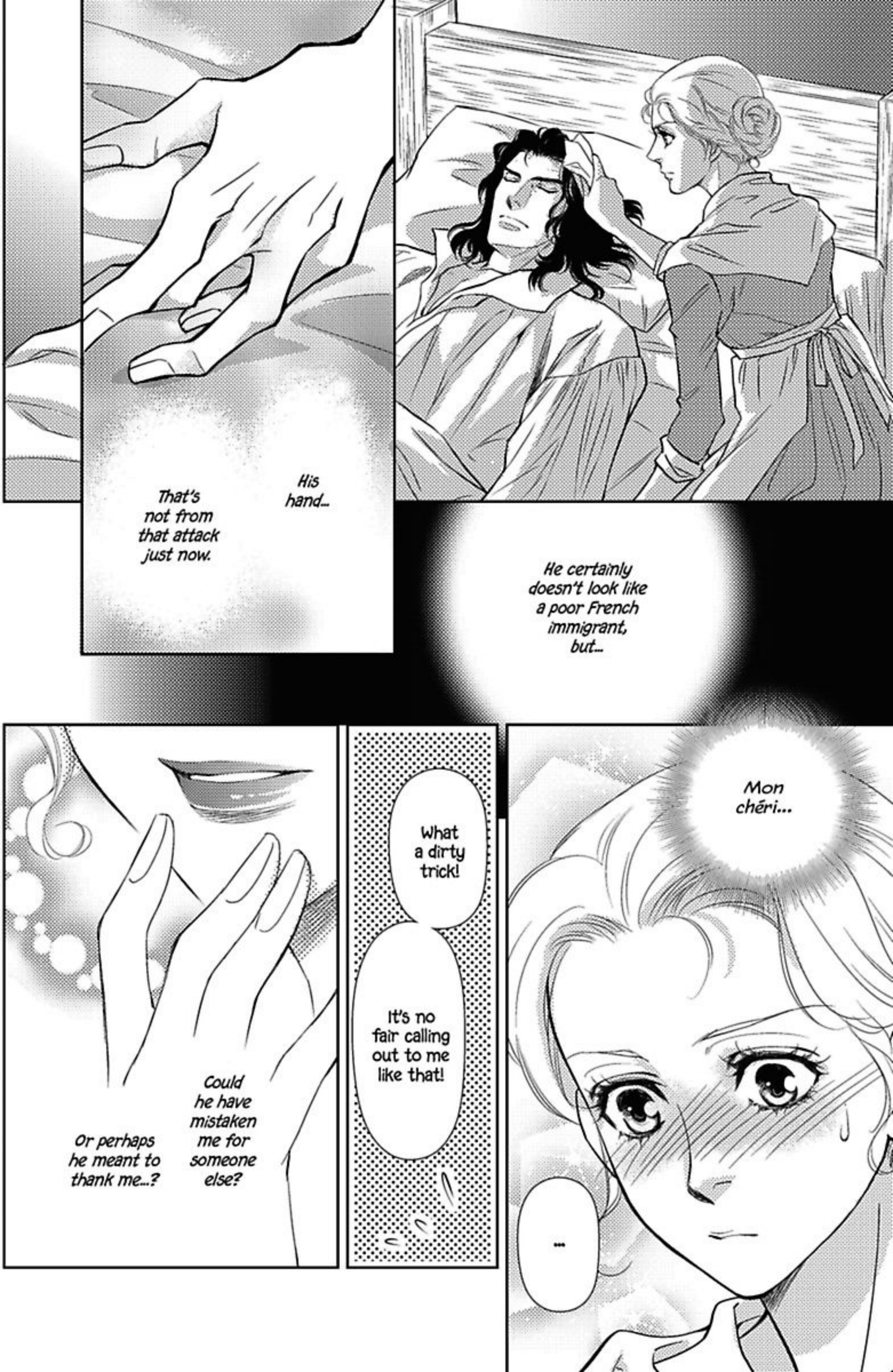
Yoko Iwasaki

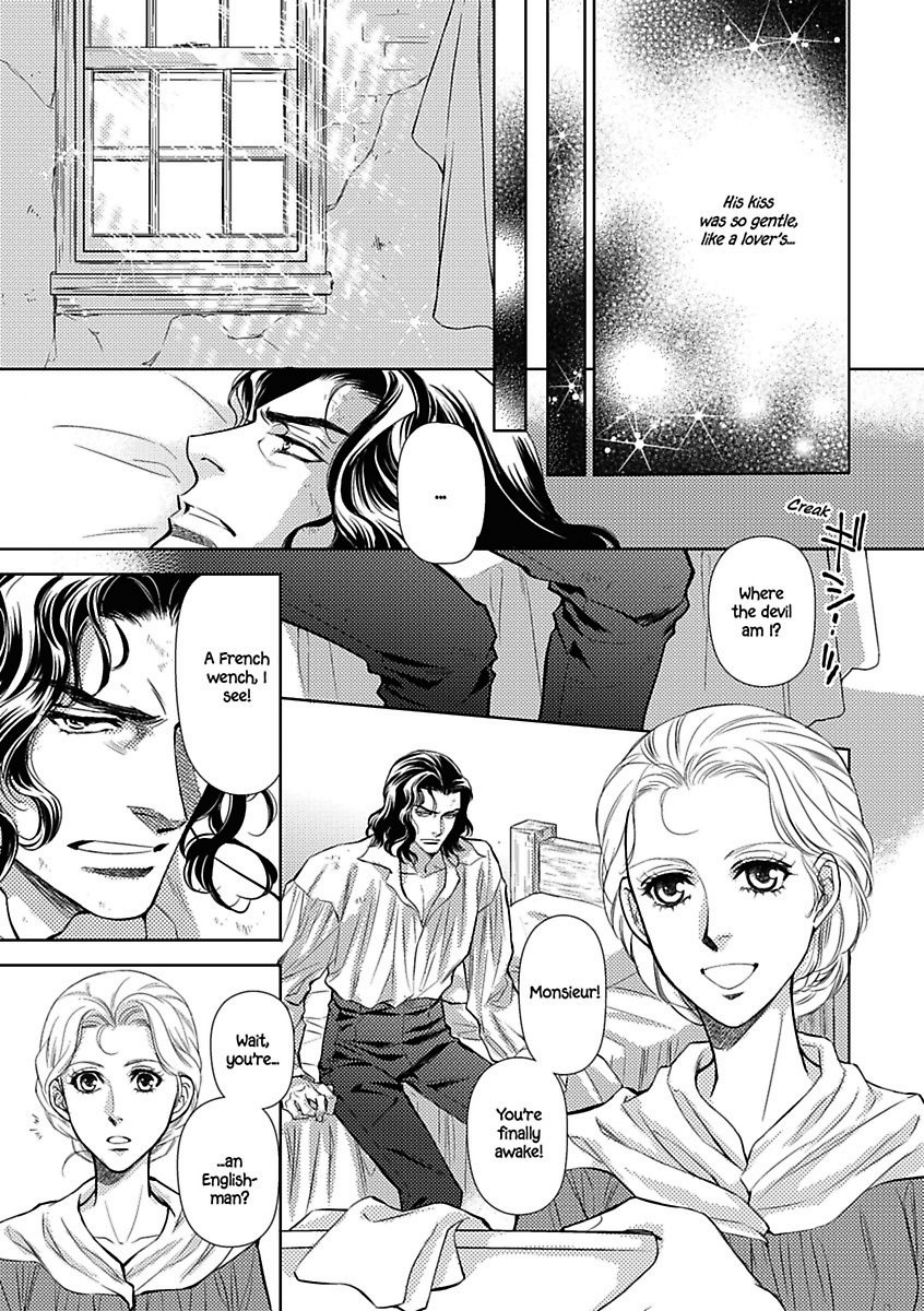
岩崎陽子

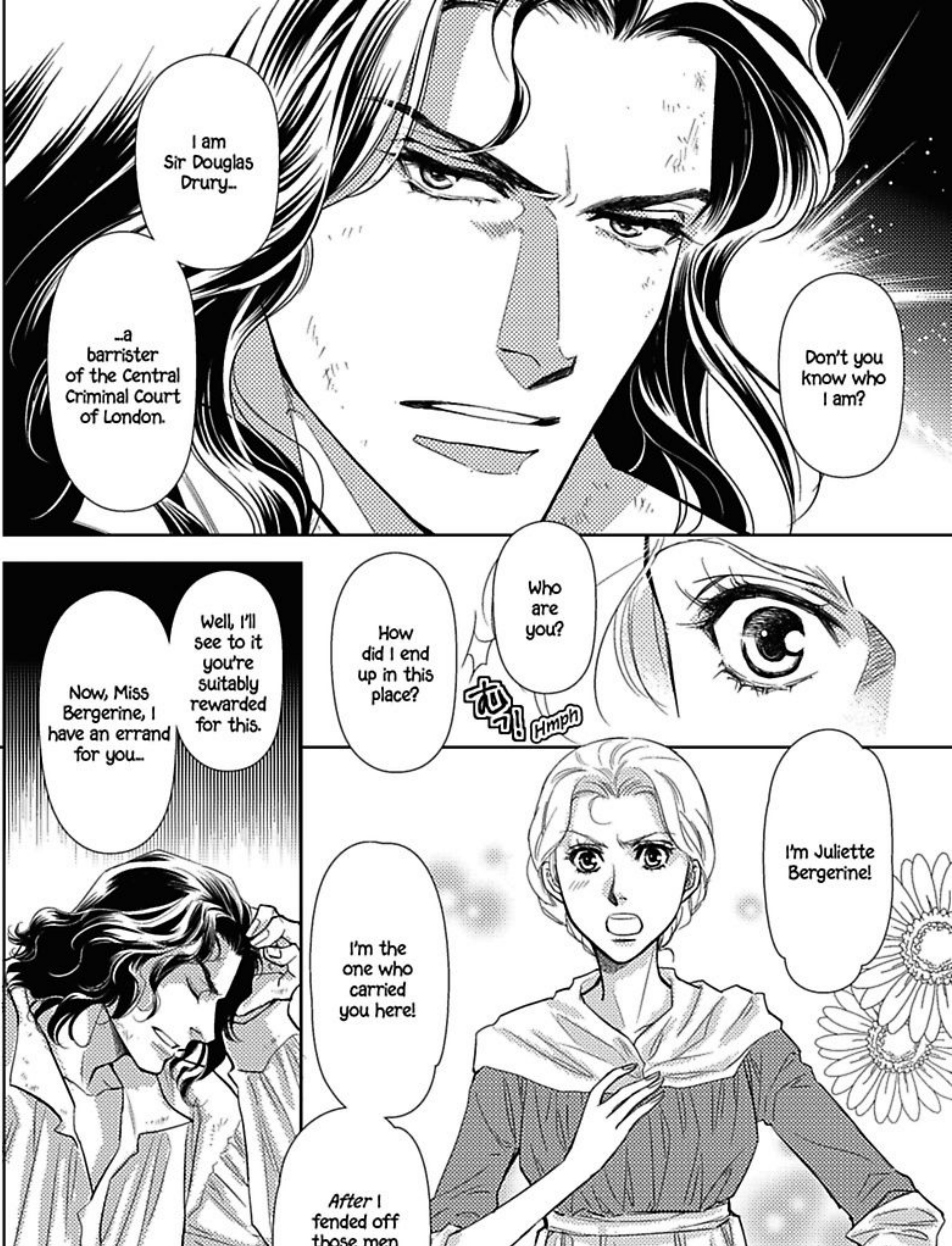
Original novel by Margaret Moore

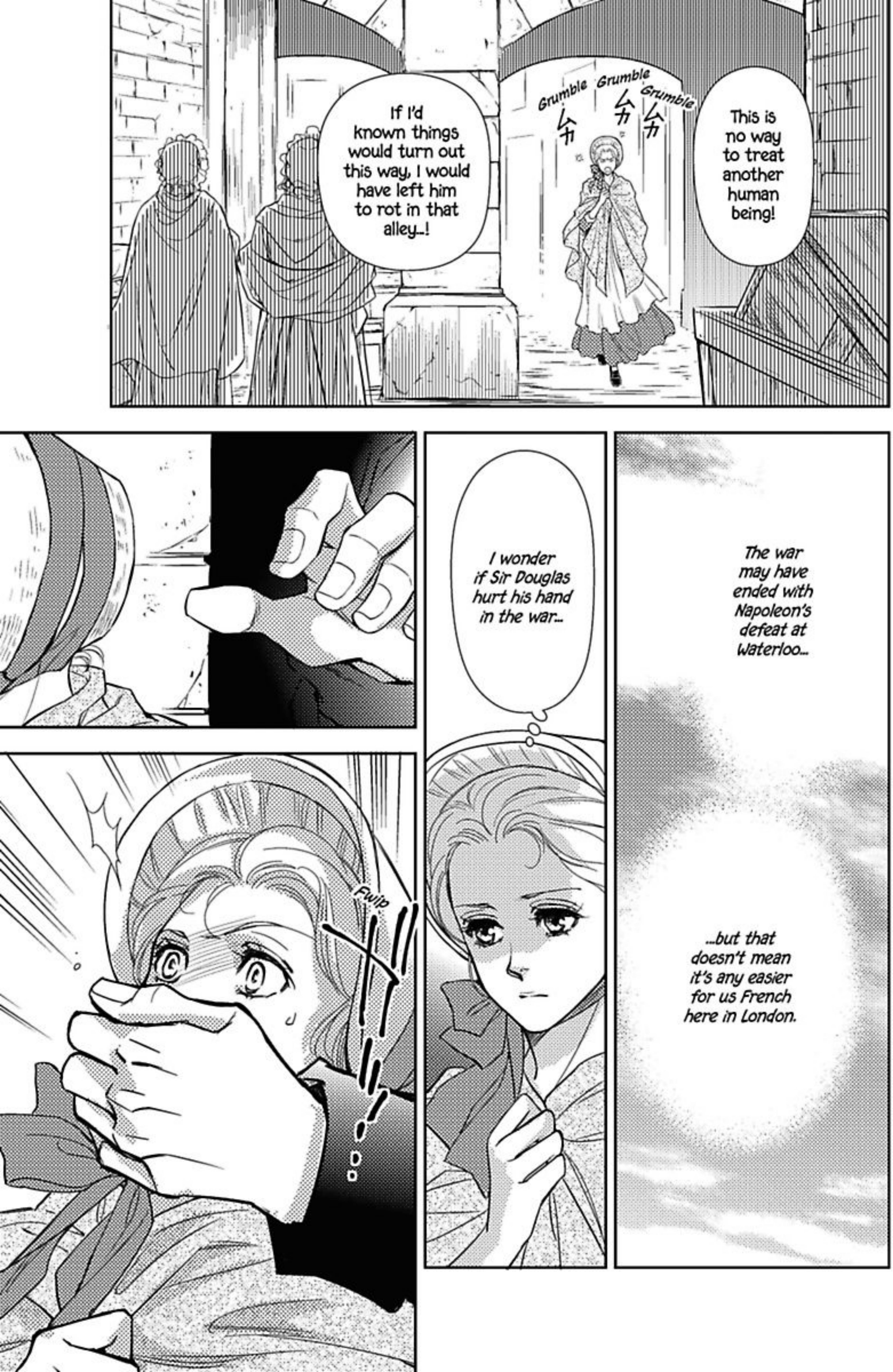

Arrêtez!
ヒュッ
Bop ボカァ!
Bonk ボコ
Augh!
Bonk ボコッ
Thump ボカ…ッ
Someone, help!
Burglars!
Highwaymen!
Murderers!
…
They fell for it!
Huff はあ
Huff はあ…
Help was never coming, anyway!
It's a cruel world we live in…

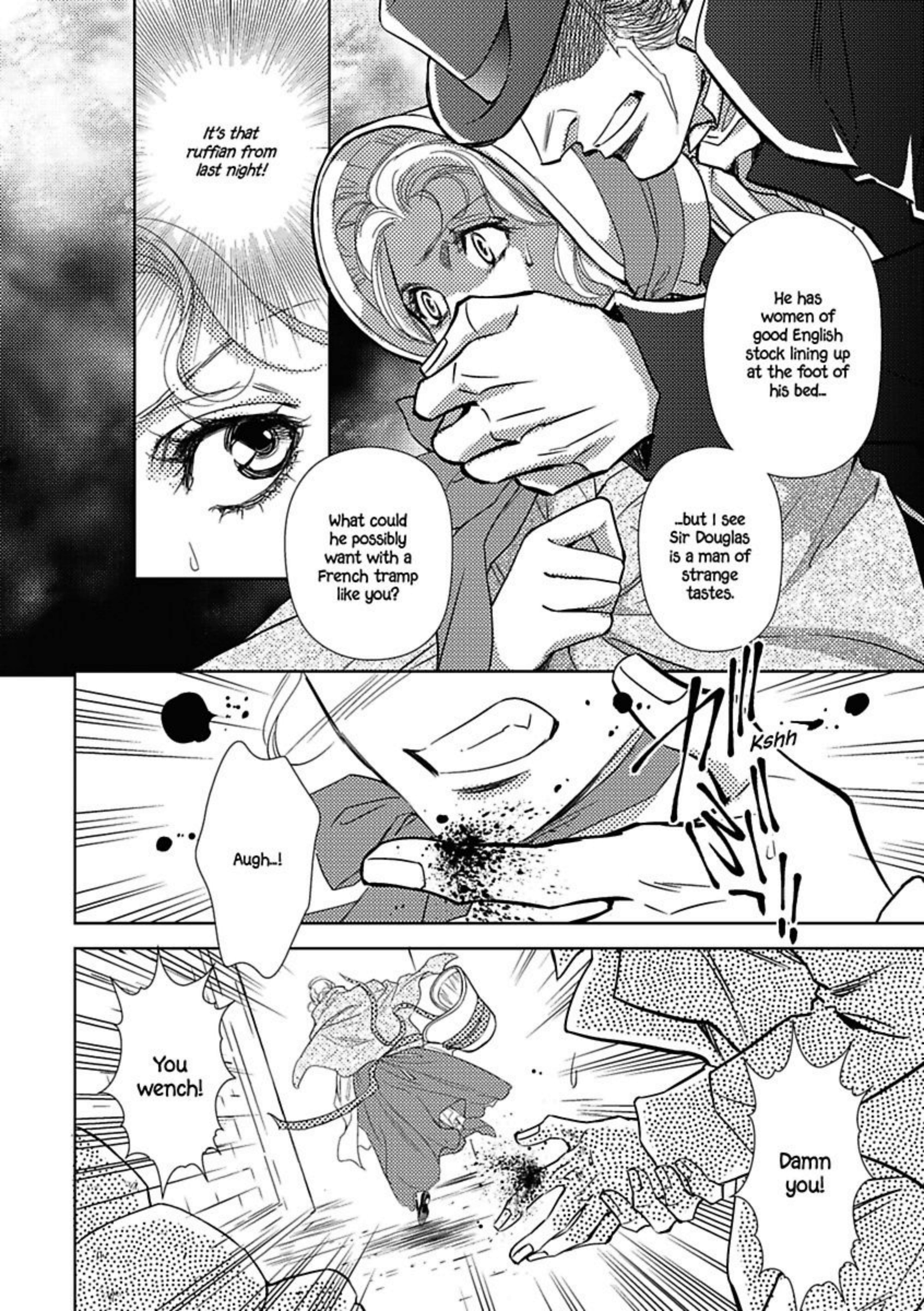

Monsieur?
Hang in there!
Matthew?
...
Mon chêri...
Ohh...!
Gasp
Fwmp
Monsieur!
Please, hang on till I get you to my room!

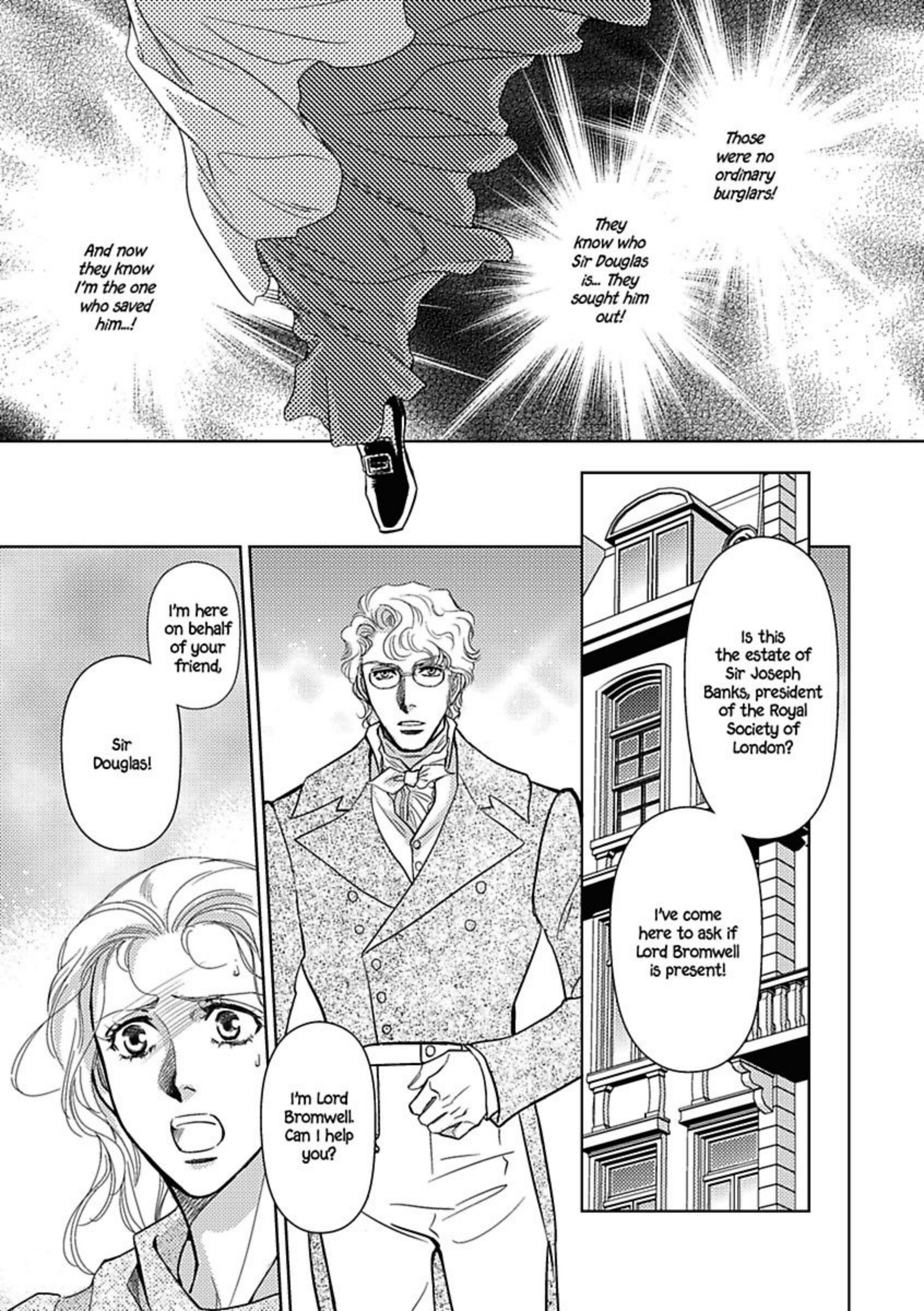

His hand...
That's not from that attack just now.
He certainly doesn't look like a poor French immigrant, but...
Mon chéri...
...
What a dirty trick!
It's no fair calling out to me like that!
Could he have mistaken me for someone else?
Or perhaps he meant to thank me...?

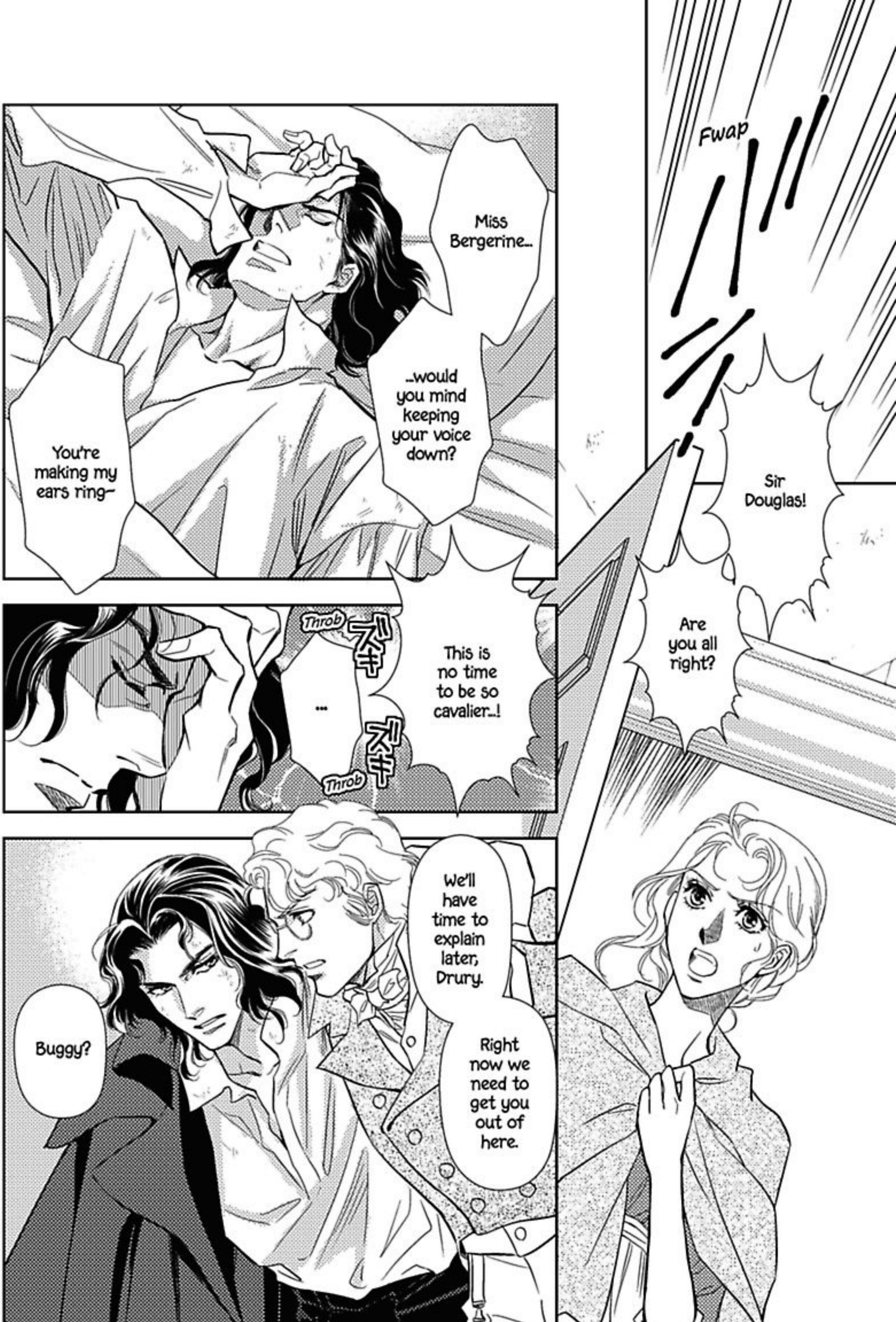

His kiss was so gentle, like a lover's...
...
Creak
Where the devil am I?
Monsieur!
You're finally awake!
A French wench, I see!
Wait, you're...
...an Englishman?

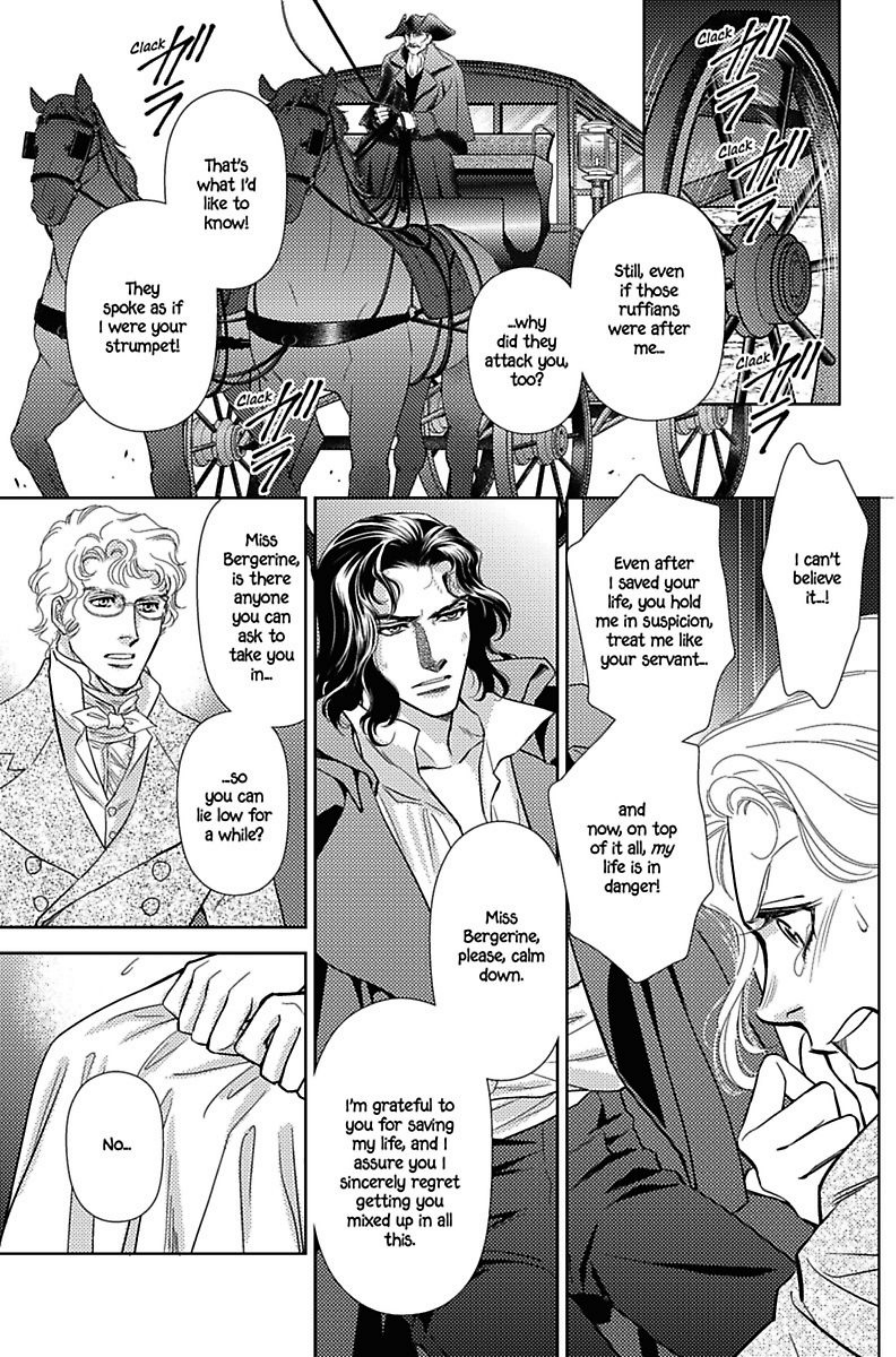

Don't you know who I am?
I am Sir Douglas Drury...
...a barrister of the Central Criminal Court of London.
Who are you?
How did I end up in this place?
Hmph
I'm Juliette Bergerine!
I'm the one who carried you here!
After I fended off those men who were attacking you!
Well, I'll see to it you're suitably rewarded for this.
Now, Miss Bergerine, I have an errand for you...

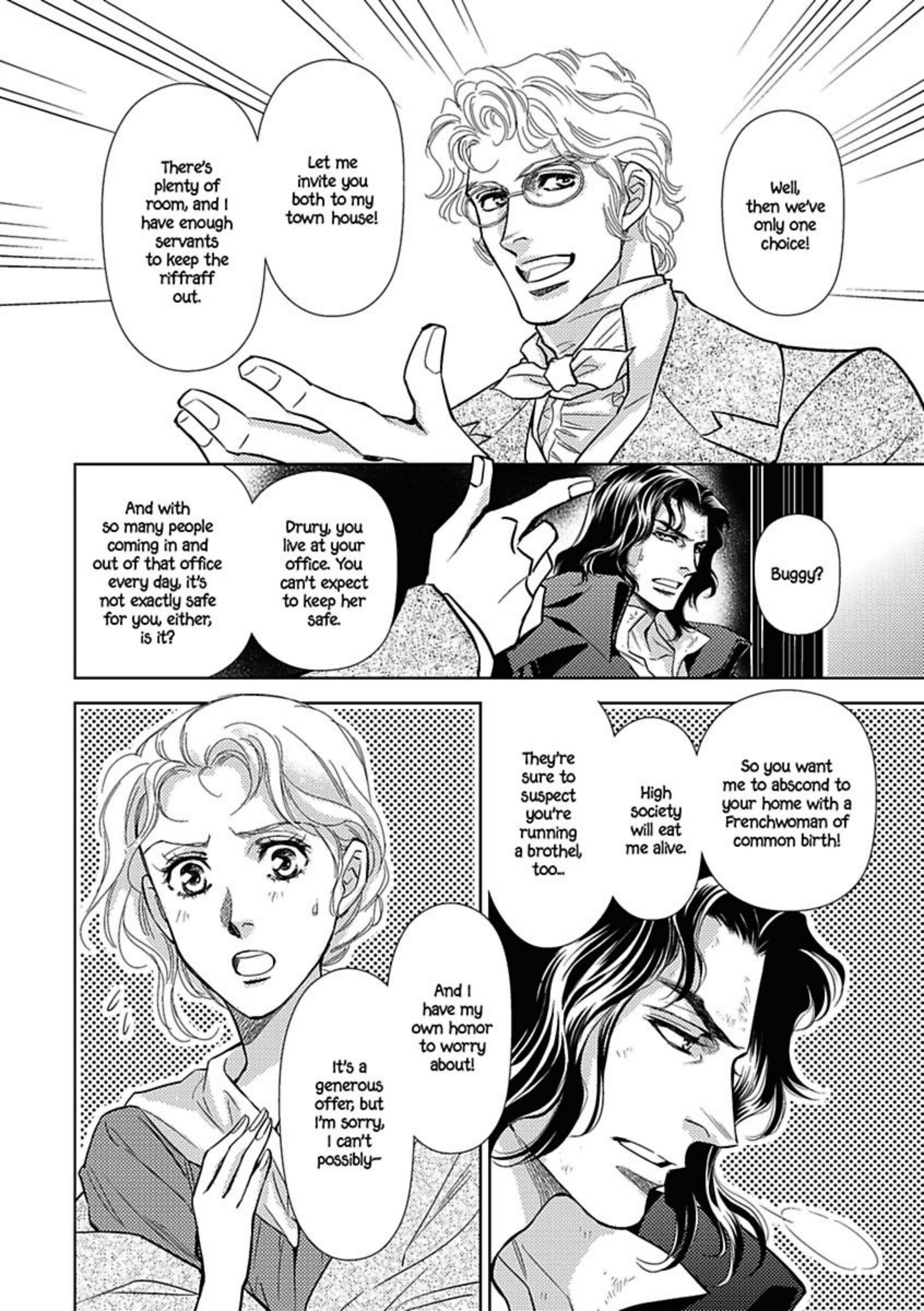

This is no way to treat another human being!
Grumble Grumble Grumble
ムカ ムカ ムカ
If I'd known things would turn out this way, I would have left him to rot in that alley...!
The war may have ended with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo...
...but that doesn't mean it's any easier for us French here in London.
I wonder if Sir Douglas hurt his hand in the war...
Fwip
!!
...

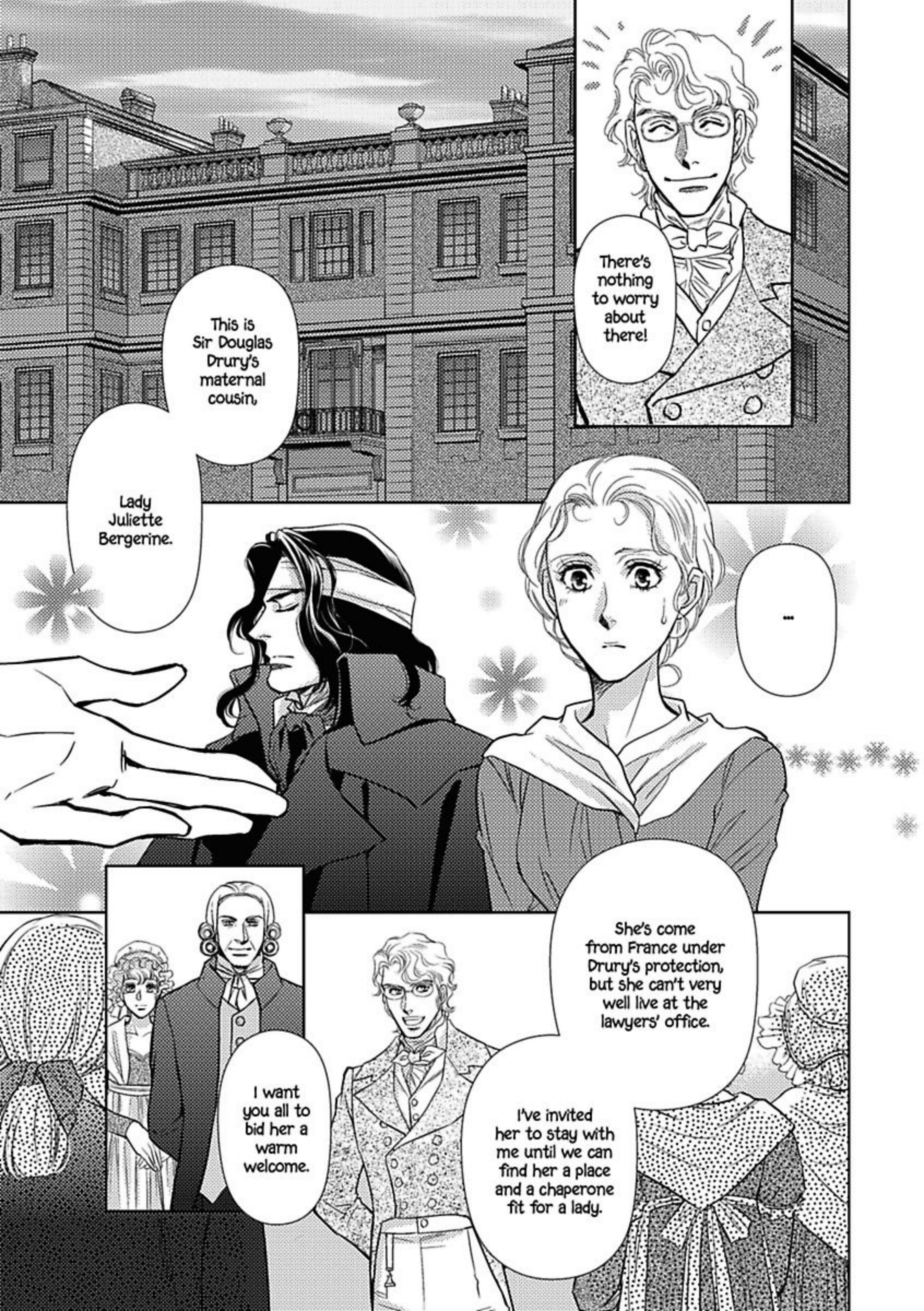

It's that ruffian from last night!
He has women of good English stock lining up at the foot of his bed...
...but I see Sir Douglas is a man of strange tastes.
What could he possibly want with a French tramp like you?
Kshh
Augh...!
Damn you!
You wench!

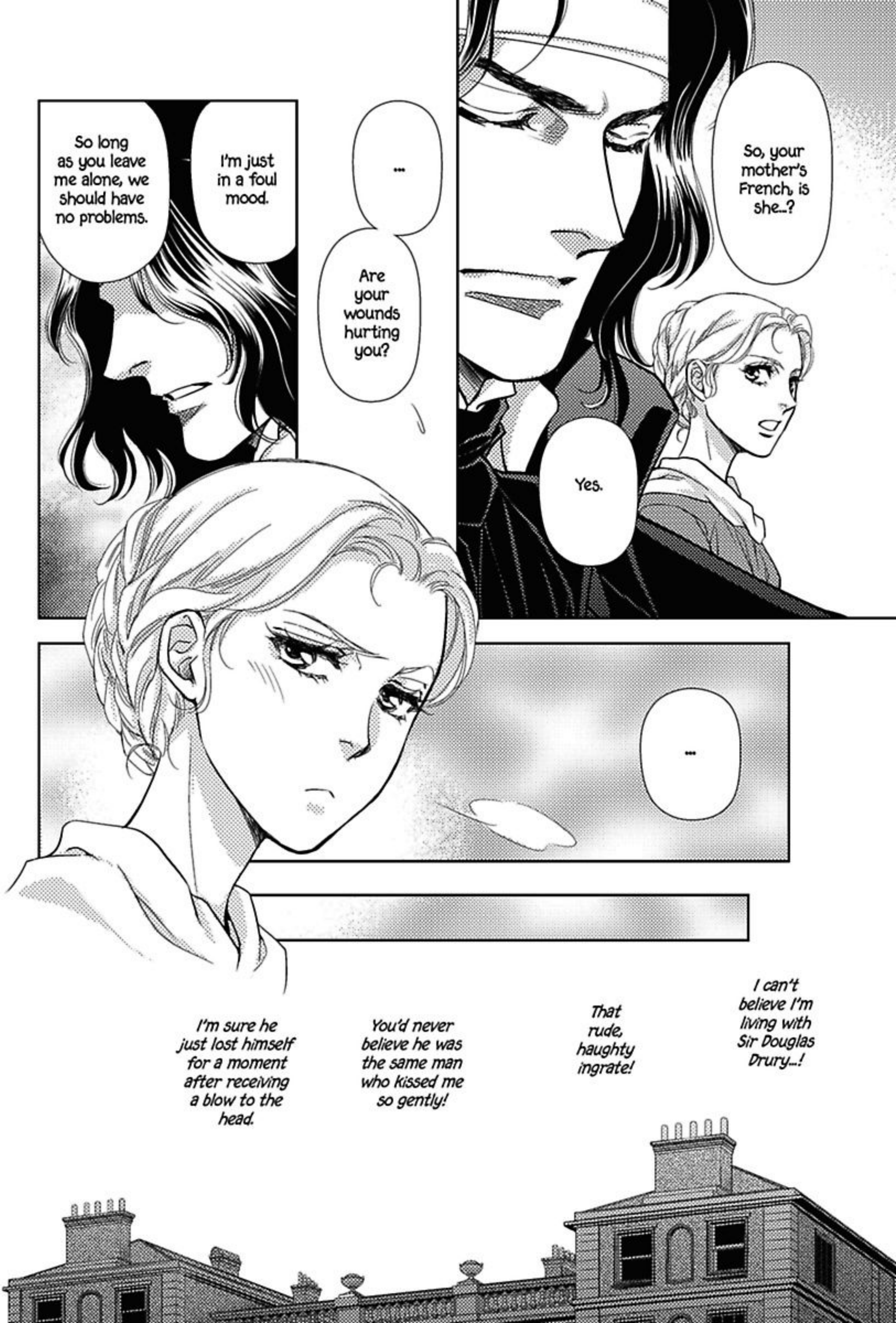

Those were no ordinary burglars!
They know who Sir Douglas is... They sought him out!
And now they know I'm the one who saved him...!
Is this the estate of Sir Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society of London?
I've come here to ask if Lord Bromwell is present!
I'm Lord Bromwell. Can I help you?
I'm here on behalf of your friend,
Sir Douglas!

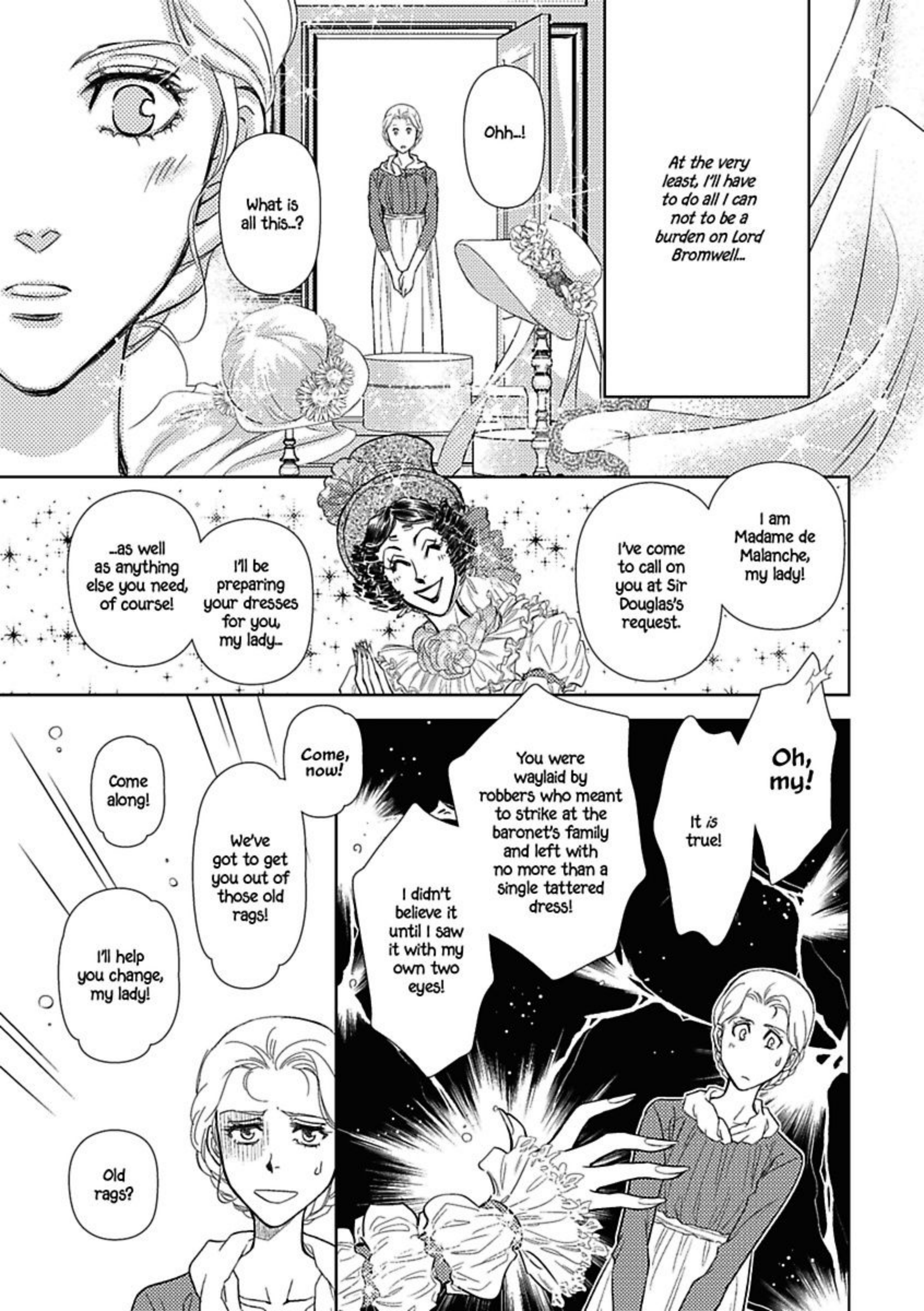

Fwap
Sir Douglas!
Are you all right?
Miss Bergerine...
...would you mind keeping your voice down?
You're making my ears ring~
This is no time to be so cavalier...!
Throb ズキ
...
ズキ Throb
We'll have time to explain later, Drury.
Right now we need to get you out of here.
Buggy?

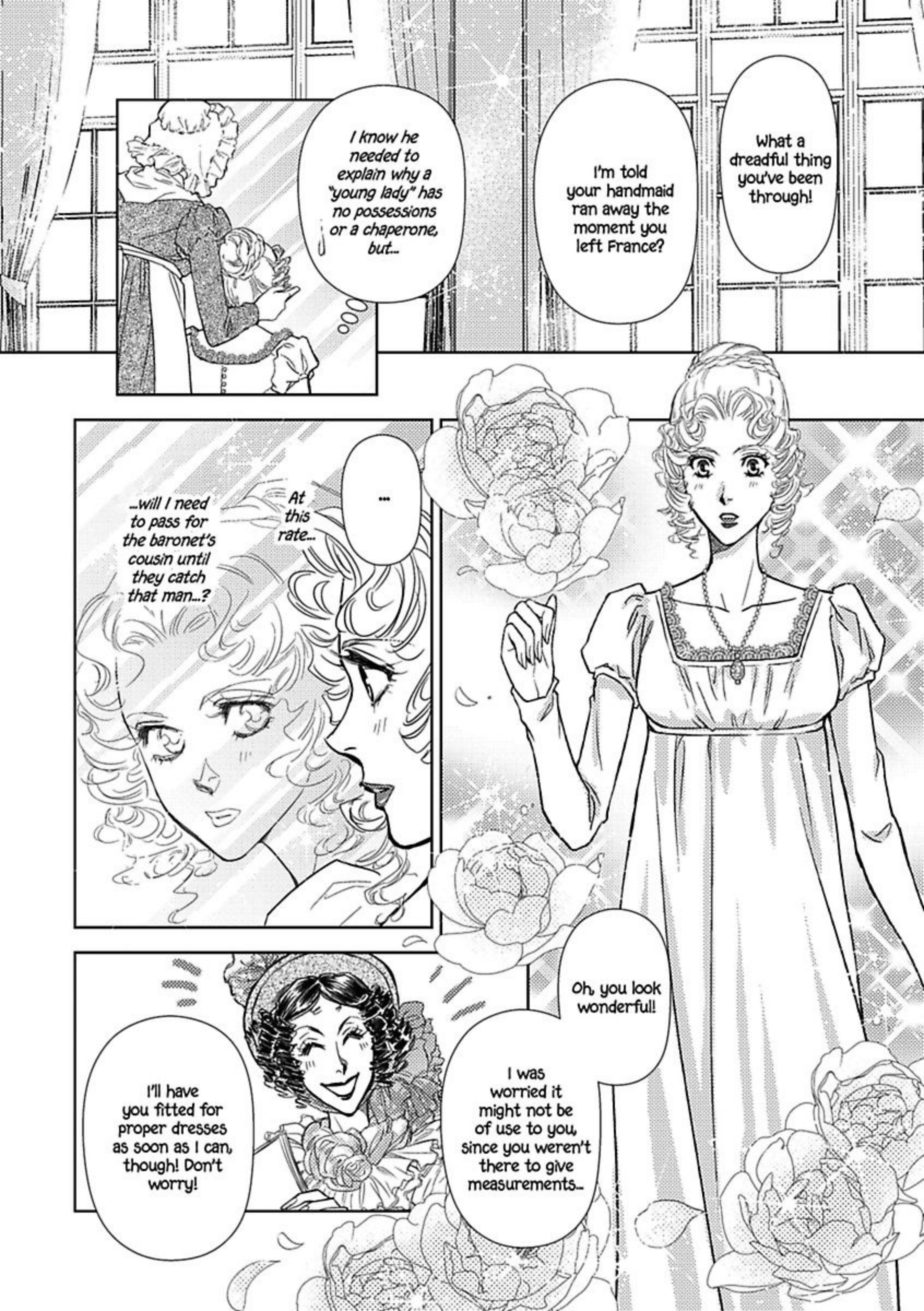

Clack ガラ
Clack ガラ
Clack ガラ
Still, even if those ruffians were after me...
...why did they attack you, too?
Clack ガラ
Clack ガラ
That's what I'd like to know!
They spoke as if I were your strumpet!
I can't believe it...!
Even after I saved your life, you hold me in suspicion, treat me like your servant...
and now, on top of it all, *my* life is in danger!
Miss Bergerine, please, calm down.
I'm grateful to you for saving my life, and I assure you I sincerely regret getting you mixed up in all this.
Miss Bergerine, is there anyone you can ask to take you in...
...so you can lie low for a while?
No...

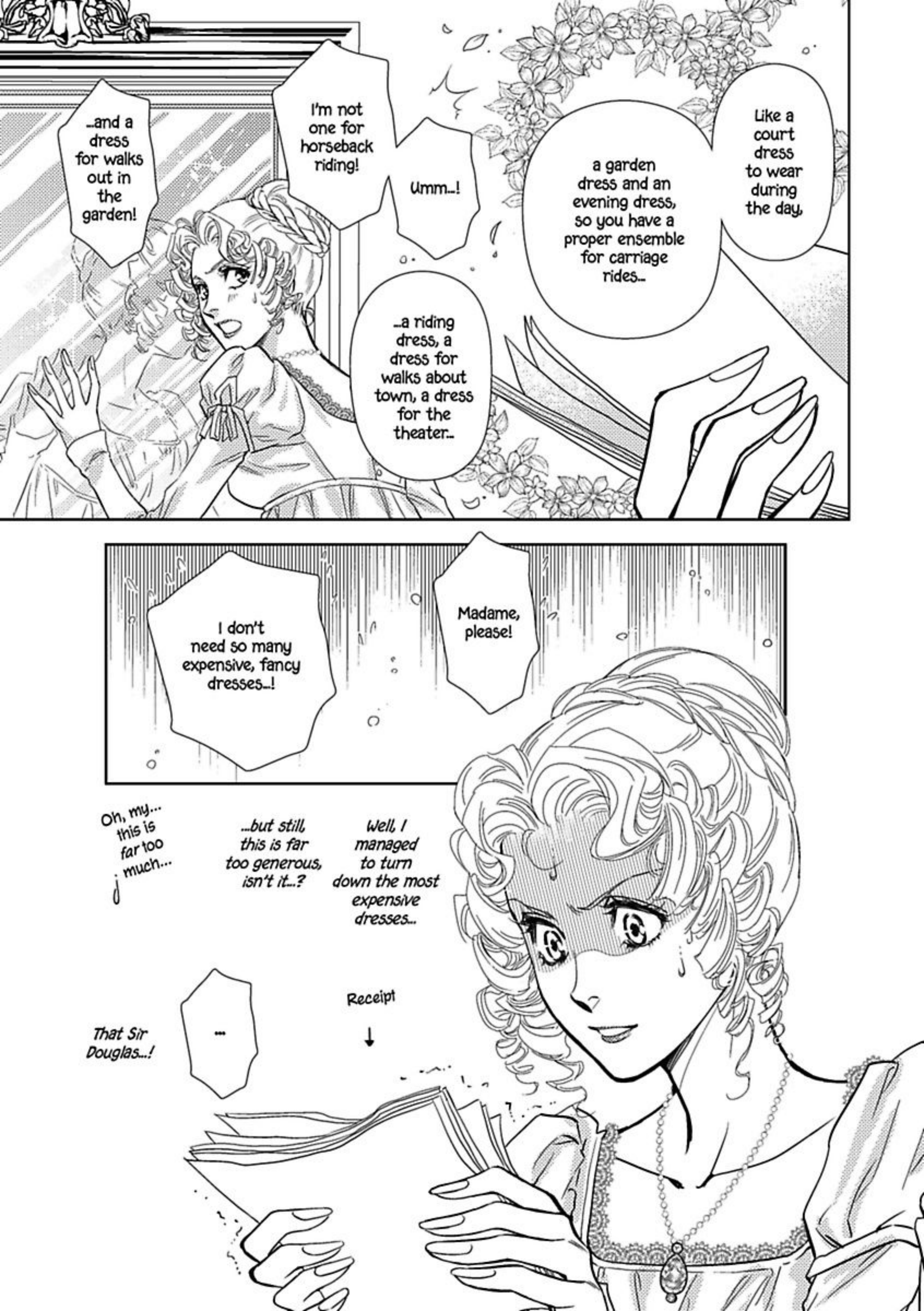

Well, then we've only one choice!
Let me invite you both to my town house!
There's plenty of room, and I have enough servants to keep the riffraff out.
Buggy?
Drury, you live at your office. You can't expect to keep her safe.
And with so many people coming in and out of that office every day, it's not exactly safe for you, either, is it?
So you want me to abscond to your home with a Frenchwoman of common birth!
High society will eat me alive.
They're sure to suspect you're running a brothel, too...
And I have my own honor to worry about!
It's a generous offer, but I'm sorry, I can't possibly–

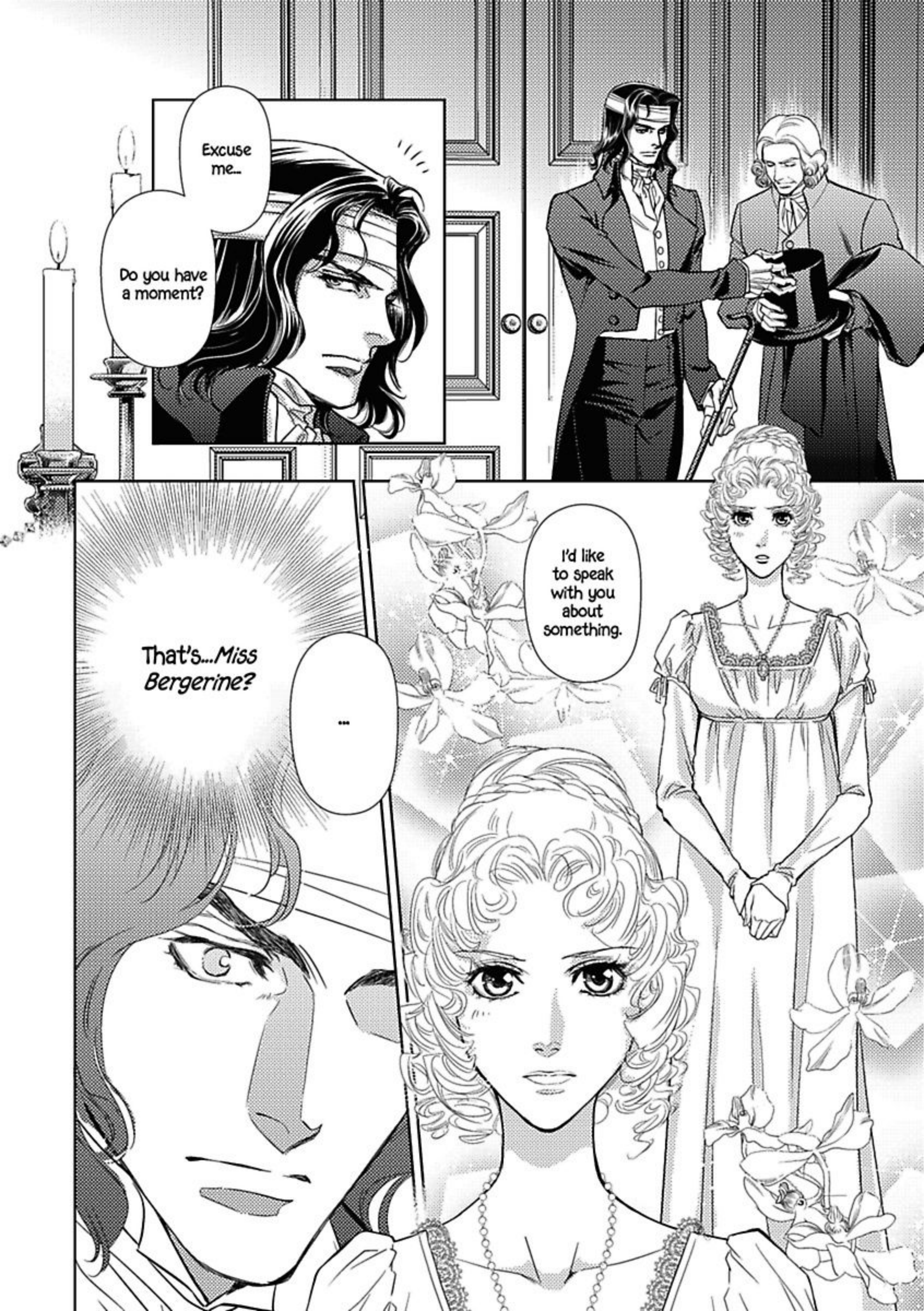

There's nothing to worry about there!
This is Sir Douglas Drury's maternal cousin,
Lady Juliette Bergerine.
...
She's come from France under Drury's protection, but she can't very well live at the lawyers' office.
I've invited her to stay with me until we can find her a place and a chaperone fit for a lady.
I want you all to bid her a warm welcome.

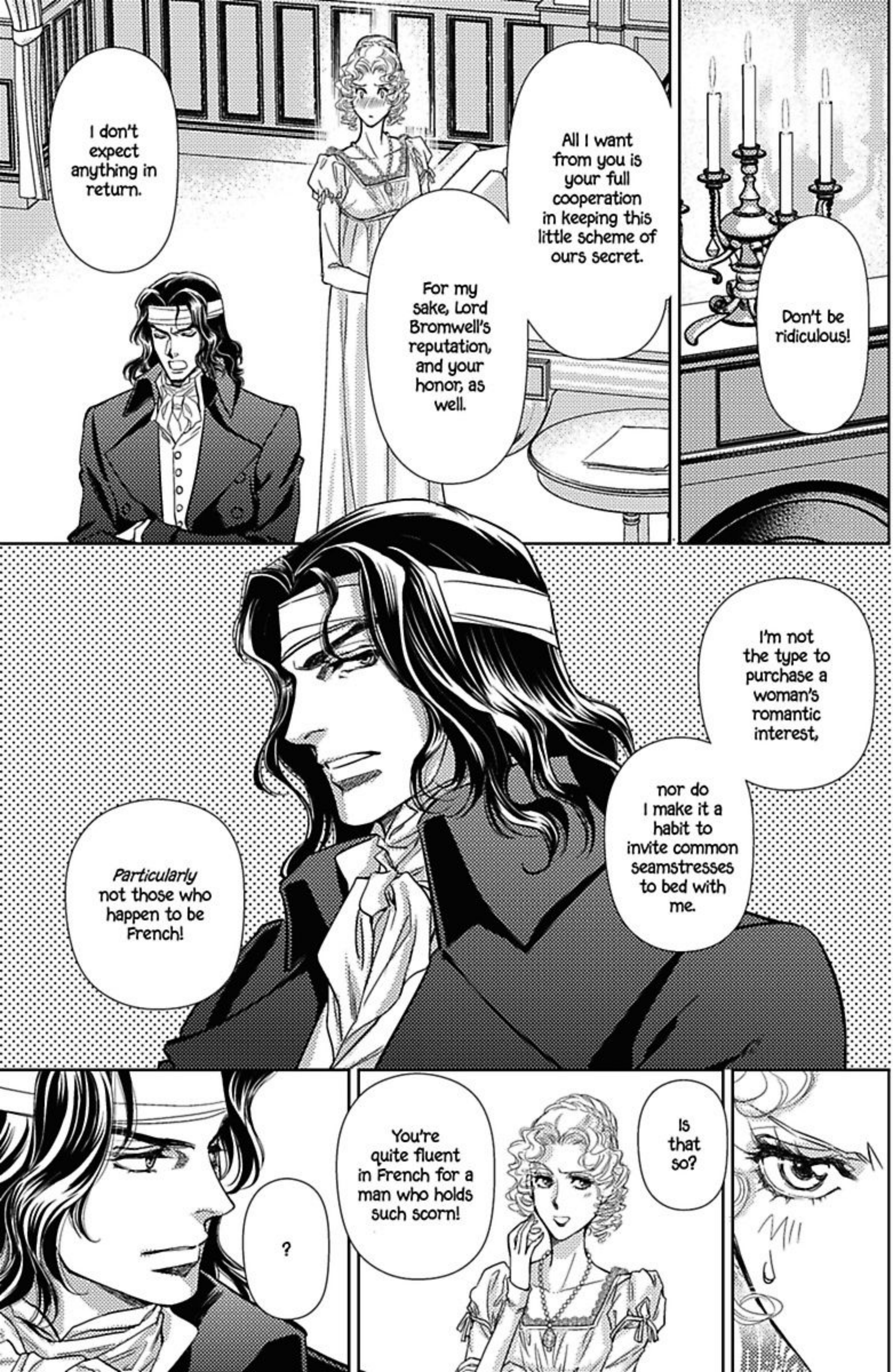

So, your mother's French, is she...?
Yes.
...
Are your wounds hurting you?
I'm just in a foul mood.
So long as you leave me alone, we should have no problems.
...
I can't believe I'm living with Sir Douglas Drury...!
That rude, haughty ingrate!
You'd never believe he was the same man who kissed me so gently!
I'm sure he just lost himself for a moment after receiving a blow to the head.

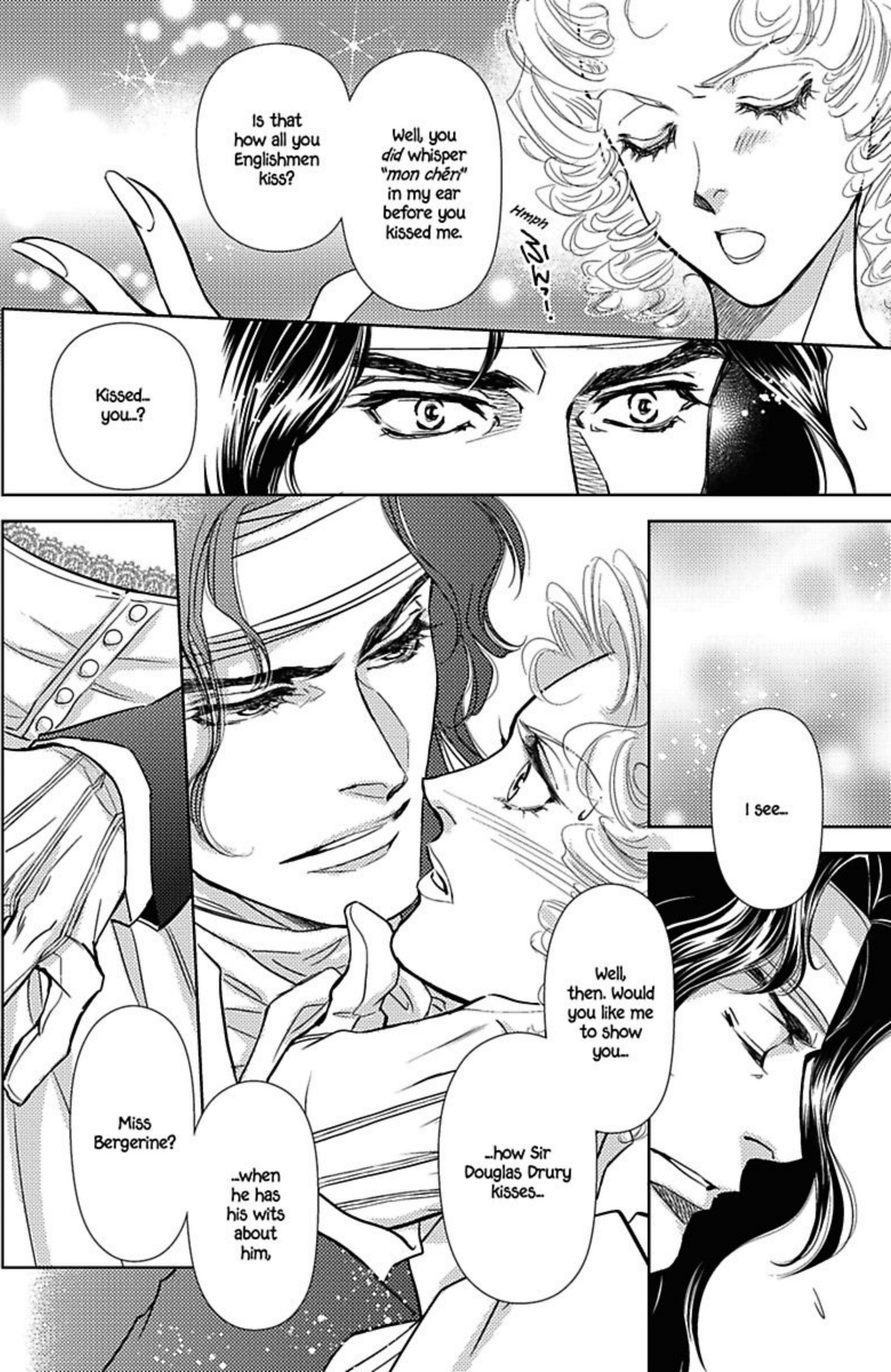

At the very least, I'll have to do all I can not to be a burden on Lord Bromwell...
Ohh...!
What is all this...?
I am Madame de Malanche, my lady!
I've come to call on you at Sir Douglas's request.
I'll be preparing your dresses for you, my lady...
...as well as anything else you need, of course!
Oh, my!
It *is* true!
You were waylaid by robbers who meant to strike at the baronet's family and left with no more than a single tattered dress!
I didn't believe it until I saw it with my own two eyes!
Come, now!
We've got to get you out of those old rags!
Come along!
I'll help you change, my lady!
Old rags?

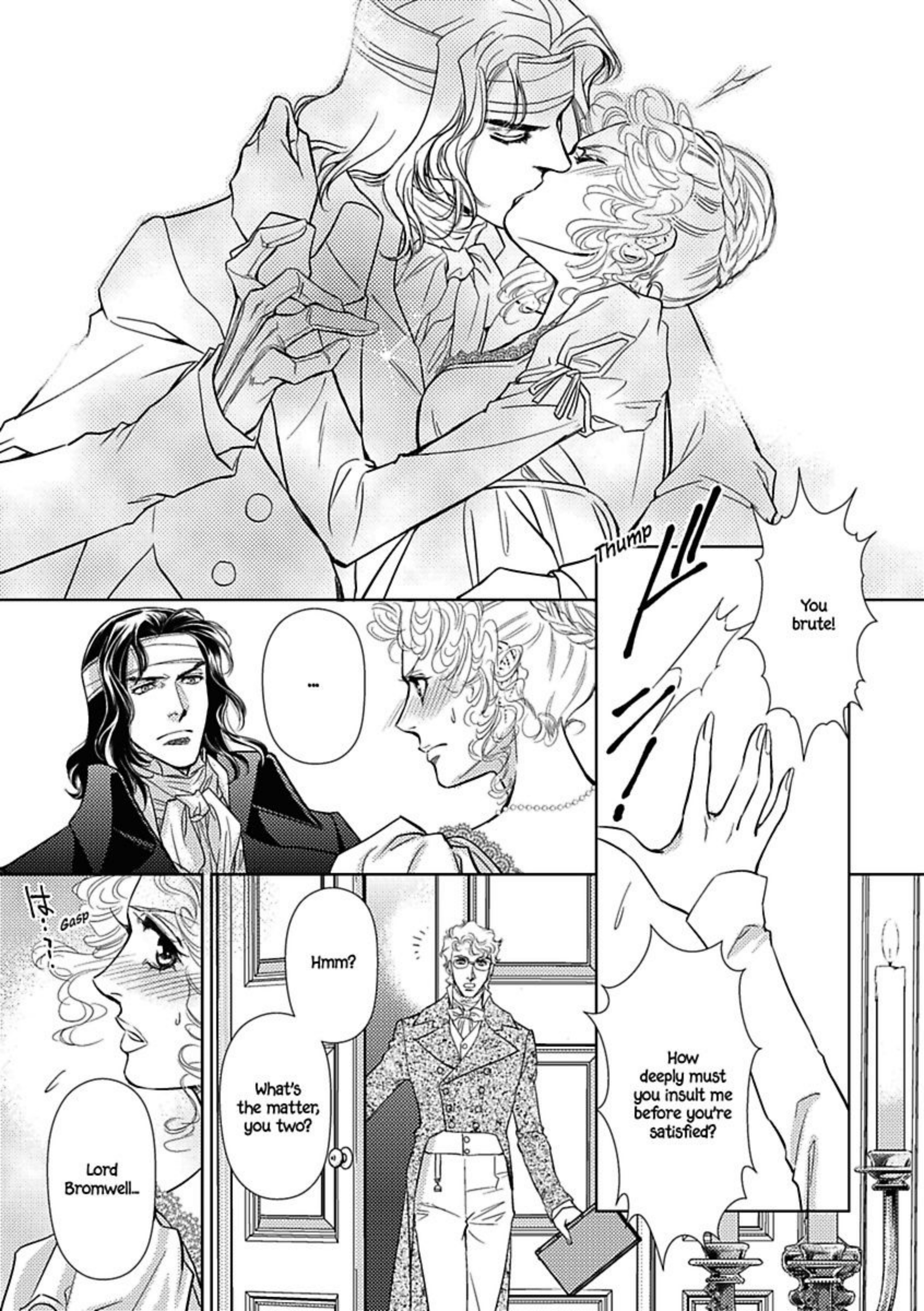

What a dreadful thing you've been through!
I'm told your handmaid ran away the moment you left France?
I know he needed to explain why a "young lady" has no possessions or a chaperone, but...
...
At this rate...
...will I need to pass for the baronet's cousin until they catch that man...?
Oh, you look wonderful!
I was worried it might not be of use to you, since you weren't there to give measurements...
I'll have you fitted for proper dresses as soon as I can, though! Don't worry!

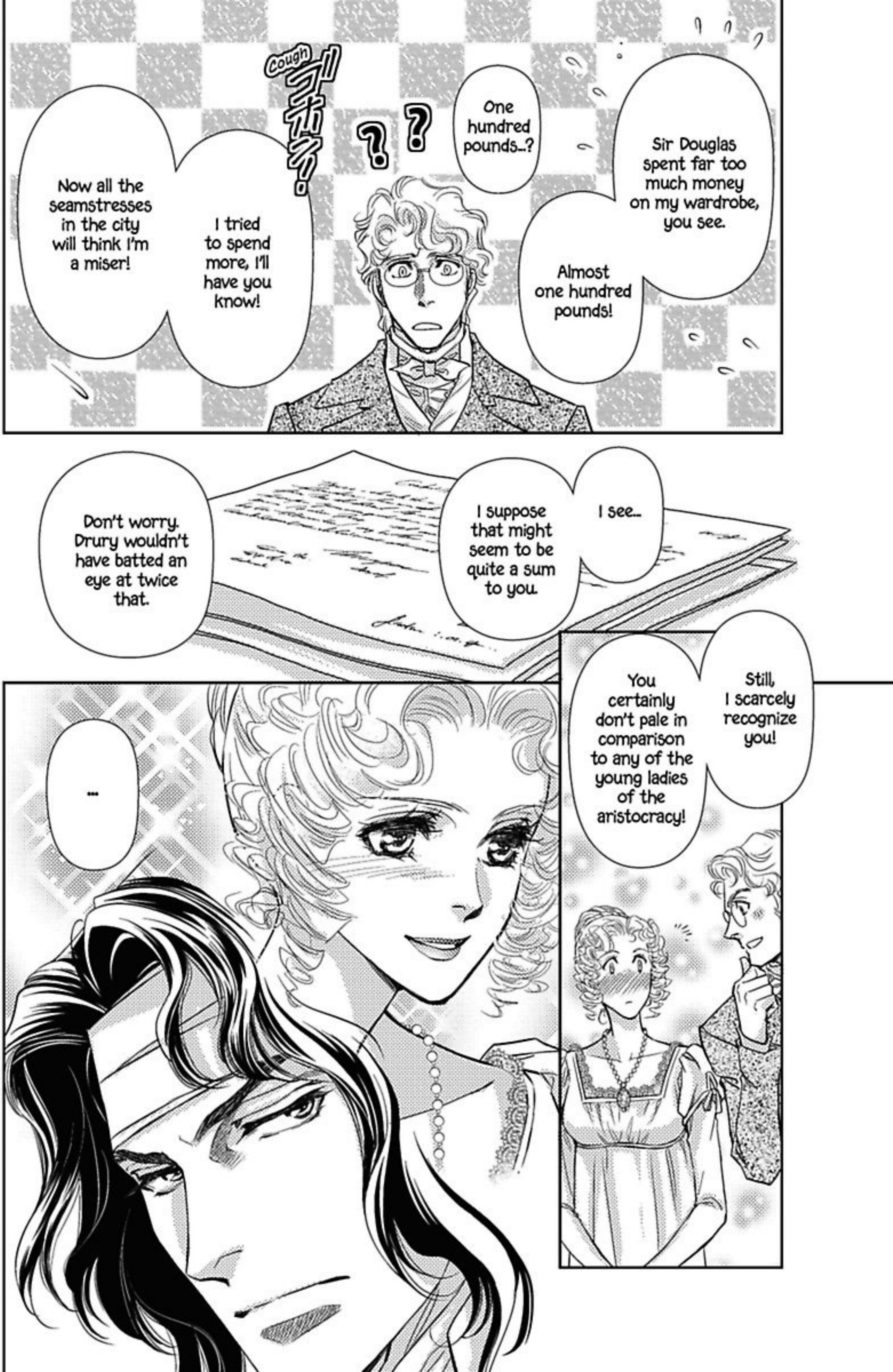

Like a court dress to wear during the day,
a garden dress and an evening dress, so you have a proper ensemble for carriage rides...
...a riding dress, a dress for walks about town, a dress for the theater...
Umm...!
I'm not one for horseback riding!
...and a dress for walks out in the garden!
Madame, please!
I don't need so many expensive, fancy dresses...!
Well, I managed to turn down the most expensive dresses...
...but still, this is far too generous, isn't it...?
Oh, my... this is far too much...
Receipt
...
That Sir Douglas...!

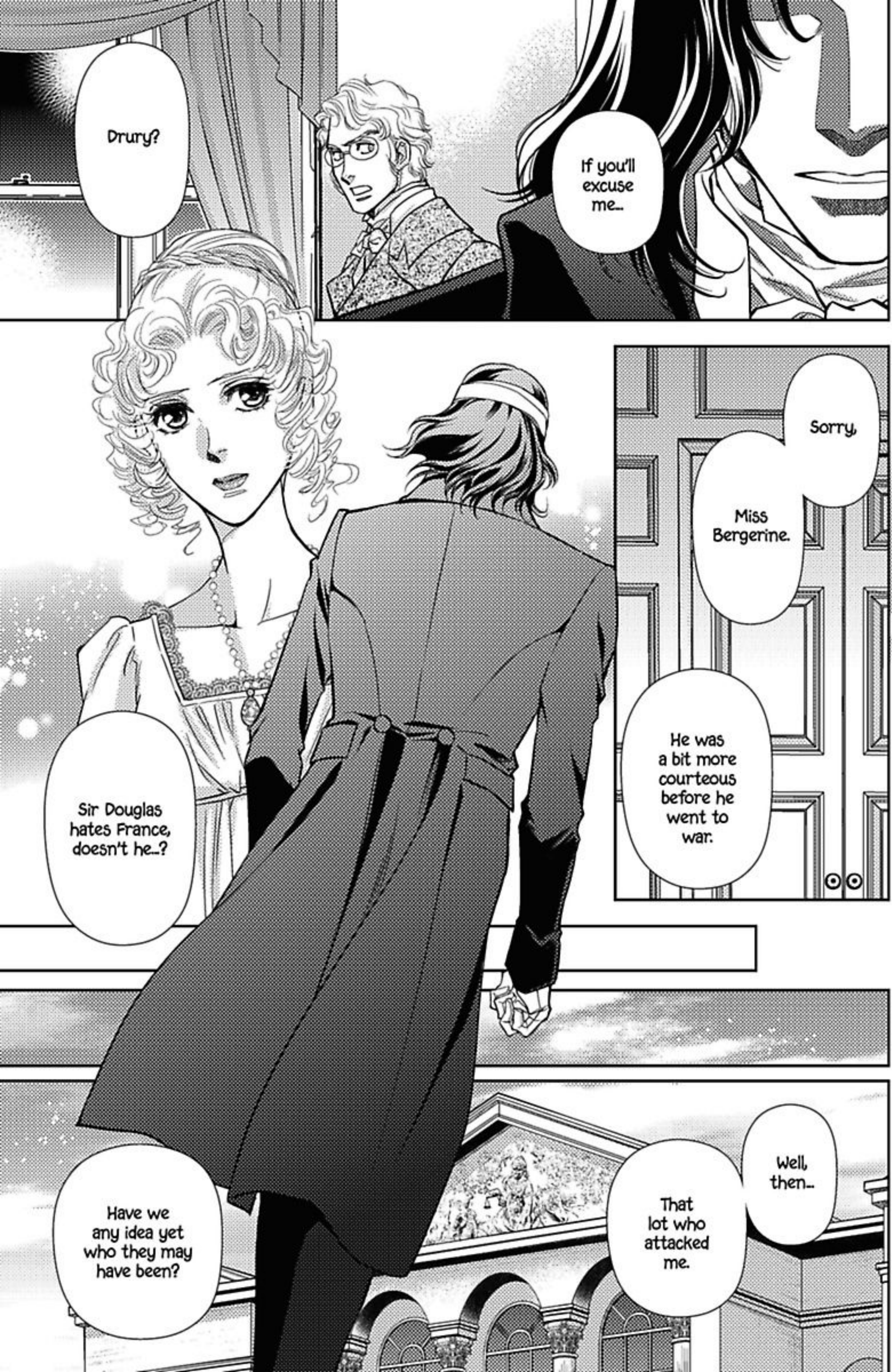

Excuse me...
Do you have a moment?
I'd like to speak with you about something.
...
That's...*Miss Bergerine?*

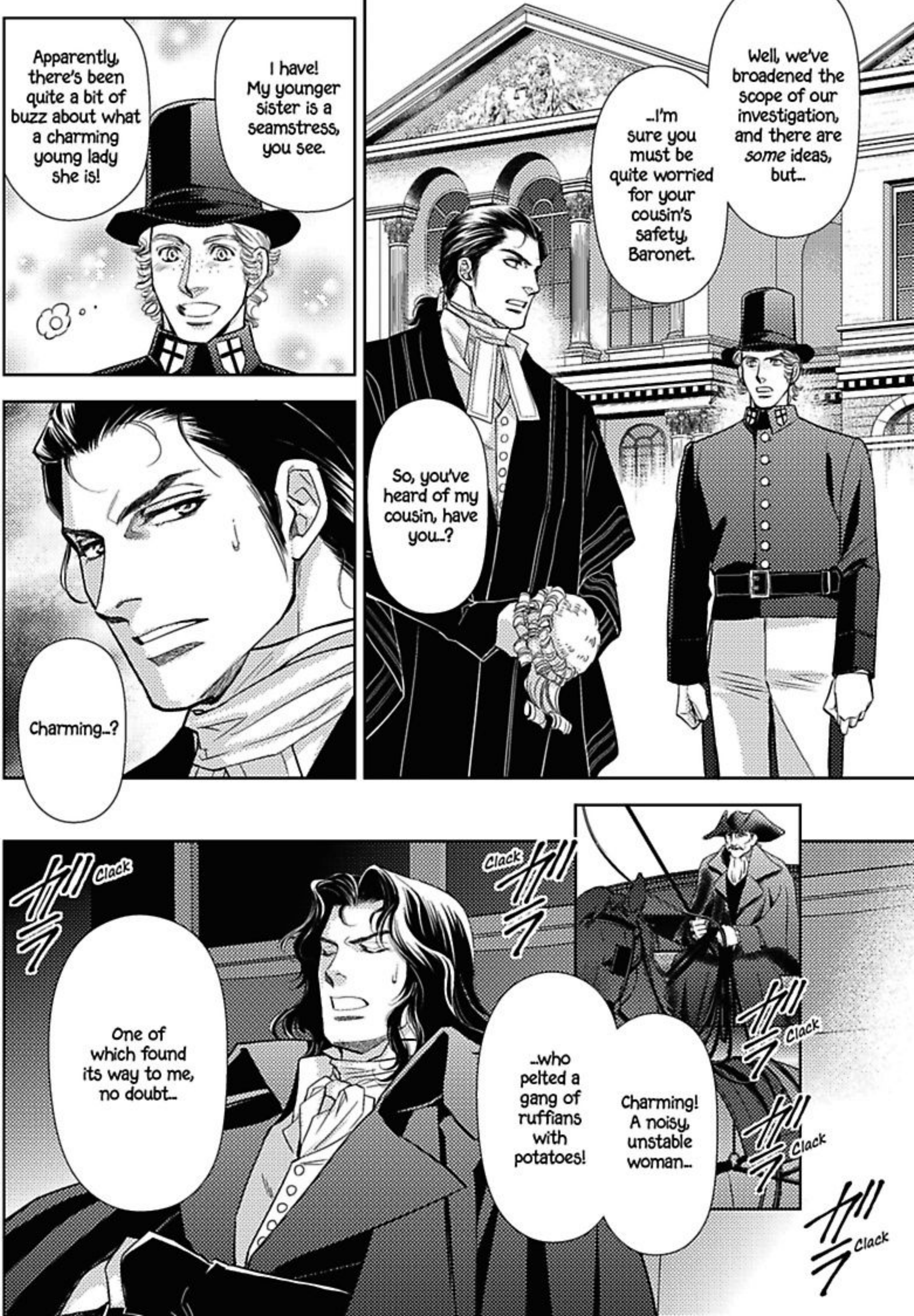

I don't expect anything in return.
All I want from you is your full cooperation in keeping this little scheme of ours secret.
For my sake, Lord Bromwell's reputation, and your honor, as well.
Don't be ridiculous!
I'm not the type to purchase a woman's romantic interest,
nor do I make it a habit to invite common seamstresses to bed with me.
Particularly not those who happen to be French!
Is that so?
You're quite fluent in French for a man who holds such scorn!
?

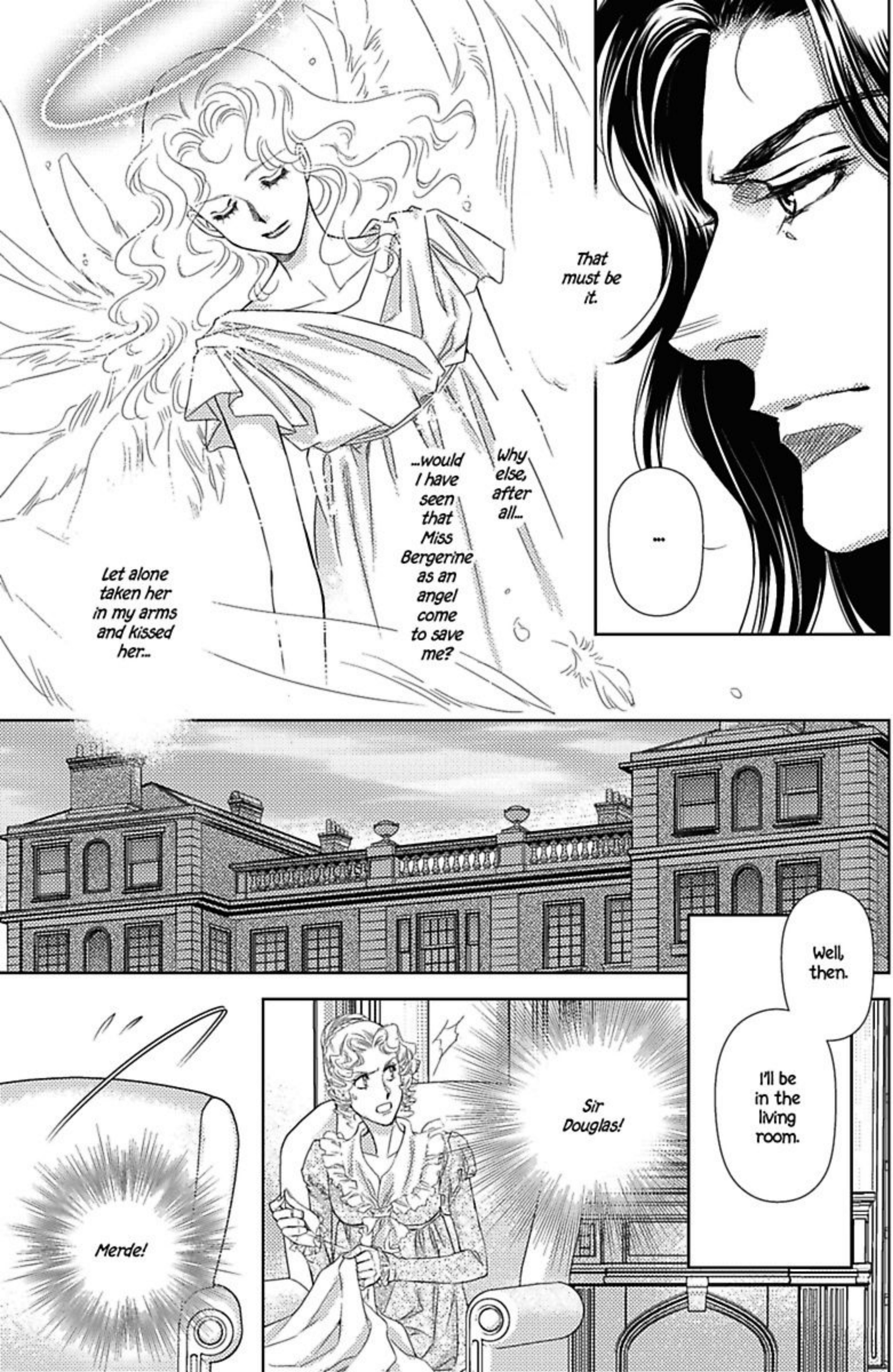

Well, you *did* whisper "*mon chéri*" in my ear before you kissed me.
Is that how all you Englishmen kiss?
Hmph
Kissed... you...?
I see...
Well, then. Would you like me to show you...
...how Sir Douglas Drury kisses...
...when he has his wits about him,
Miss Bergerine?

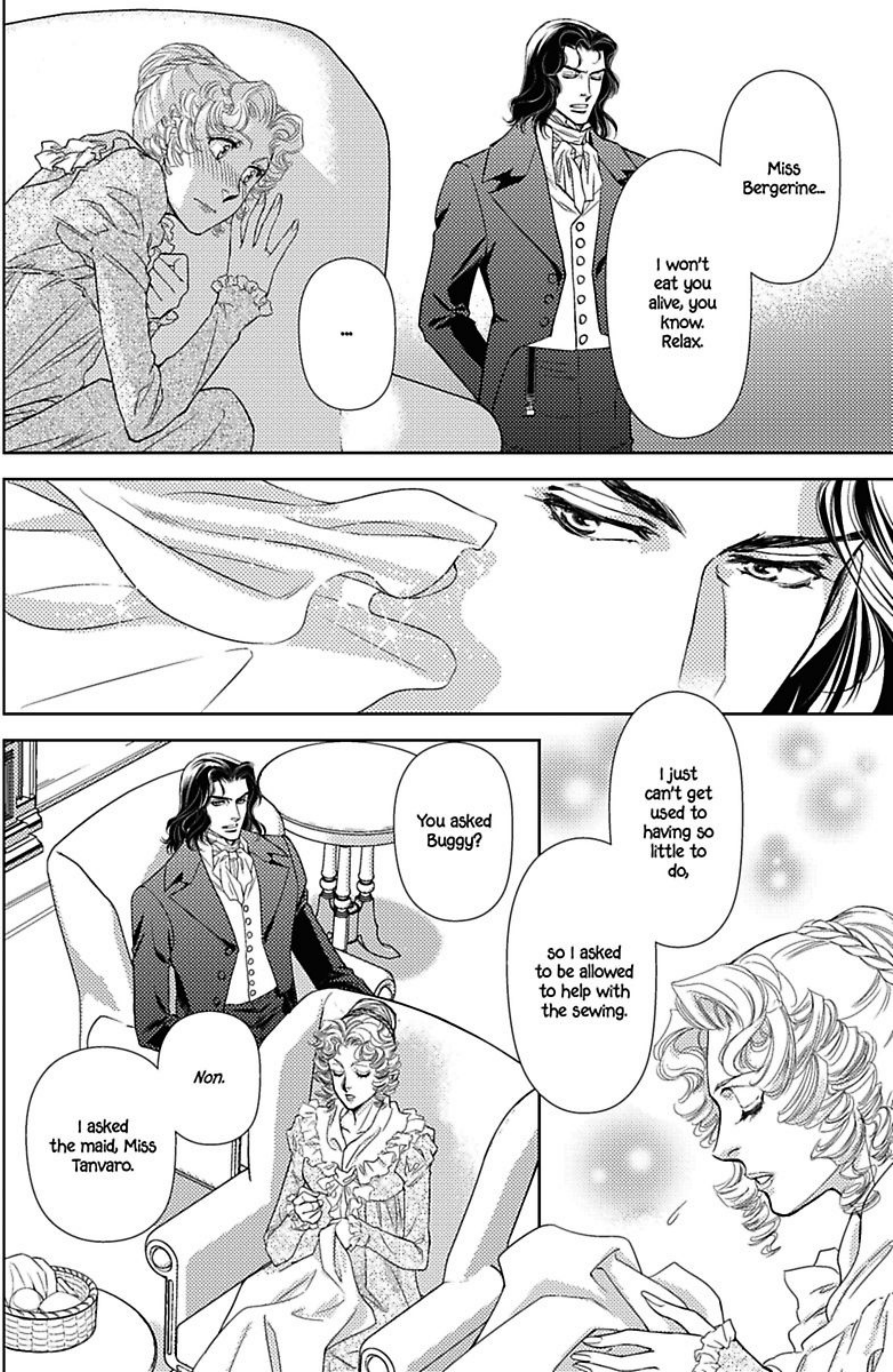

Thump
You brute!
How deeply must you insult me before you're satisfied?
...
Hmm?
What's the matter, you two?
は…っ
Gasp
Lord Bromwell...

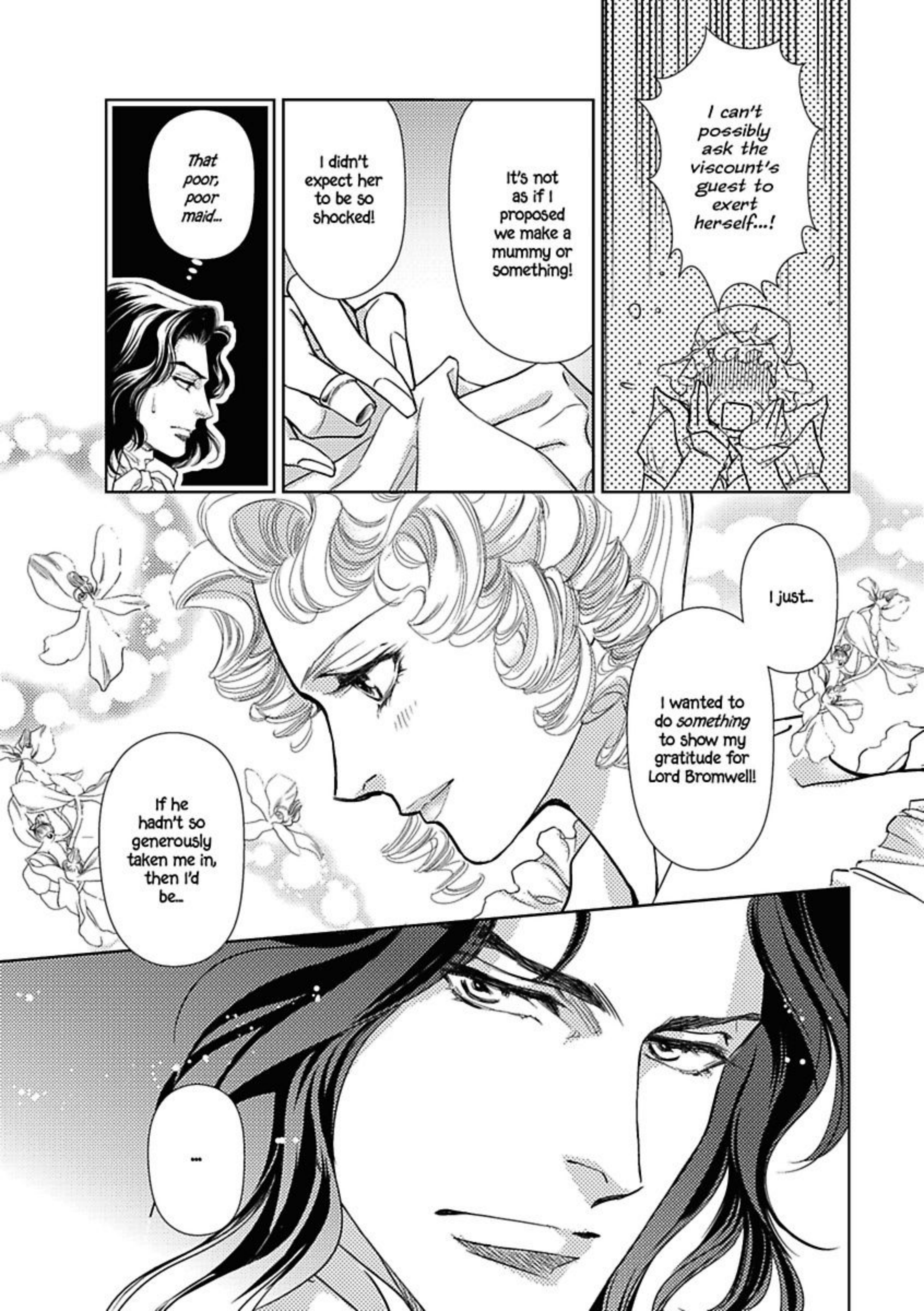

Sir Douglas spent far too much money on my wardrobe, you see.
Almost one hundred pounds!
One hundred pounds...?
? ?
Cough
ゴホッ!
I tried to spend more, I'll have you know!
Now all the seamstresses in the city will think I'm a miser!
I see...
I suppose that might seem to be quite a sum to you.
Don't worry. Drury wouldn't have batted an eye at twice that.
Still, I scarcely recognize you!
You certainly don't pale in comparison to any of the young ladies of the aristocracy!
...

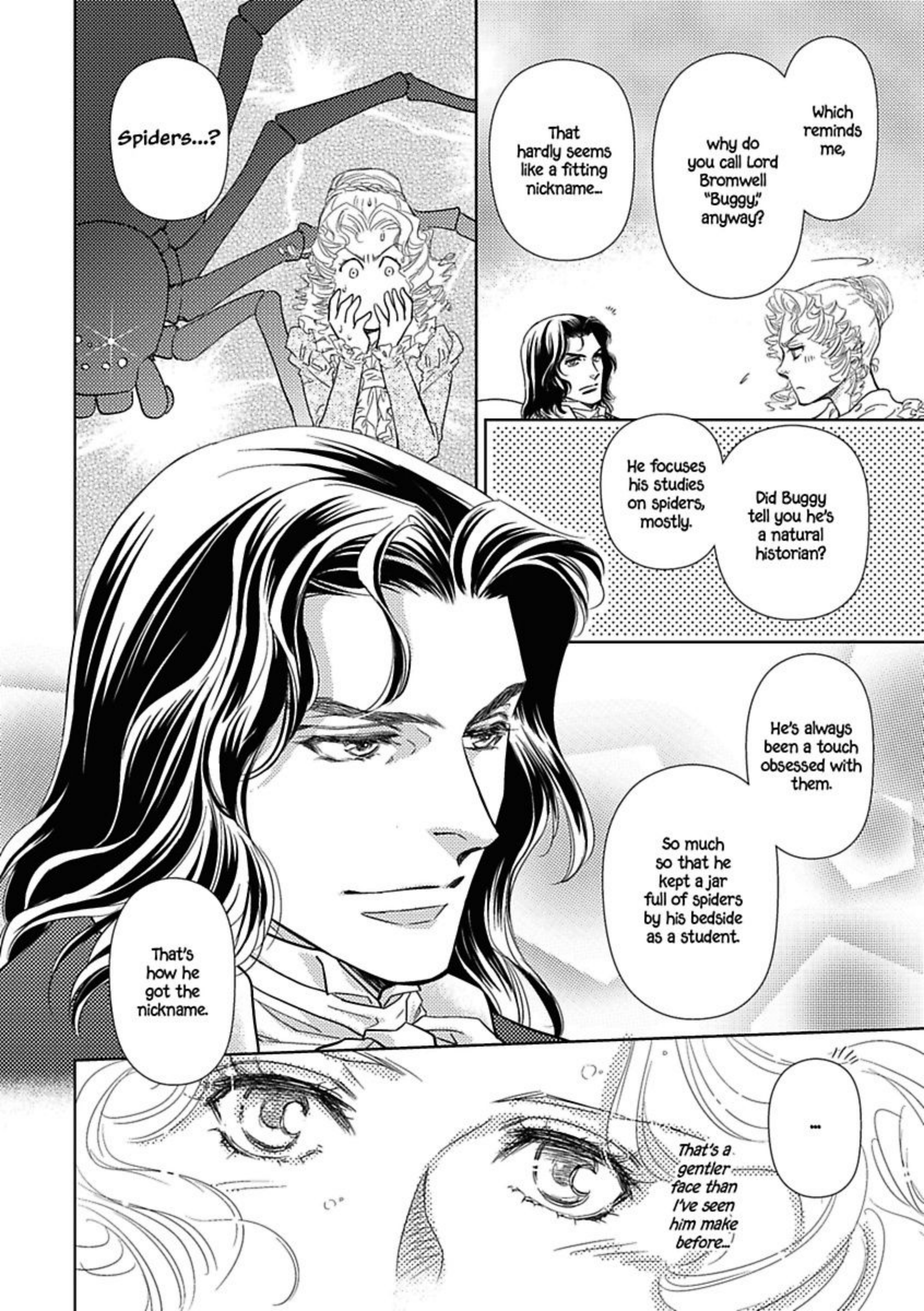

If you'll excuse me...
Drury?
Sorry, Miss Bergerine.
He was a bit more courteous before he went to war.
Sir Douglas hates France, doesn't he...?
Well, then...
That lot who attacked me.
Have we any idea yet who they may have been?

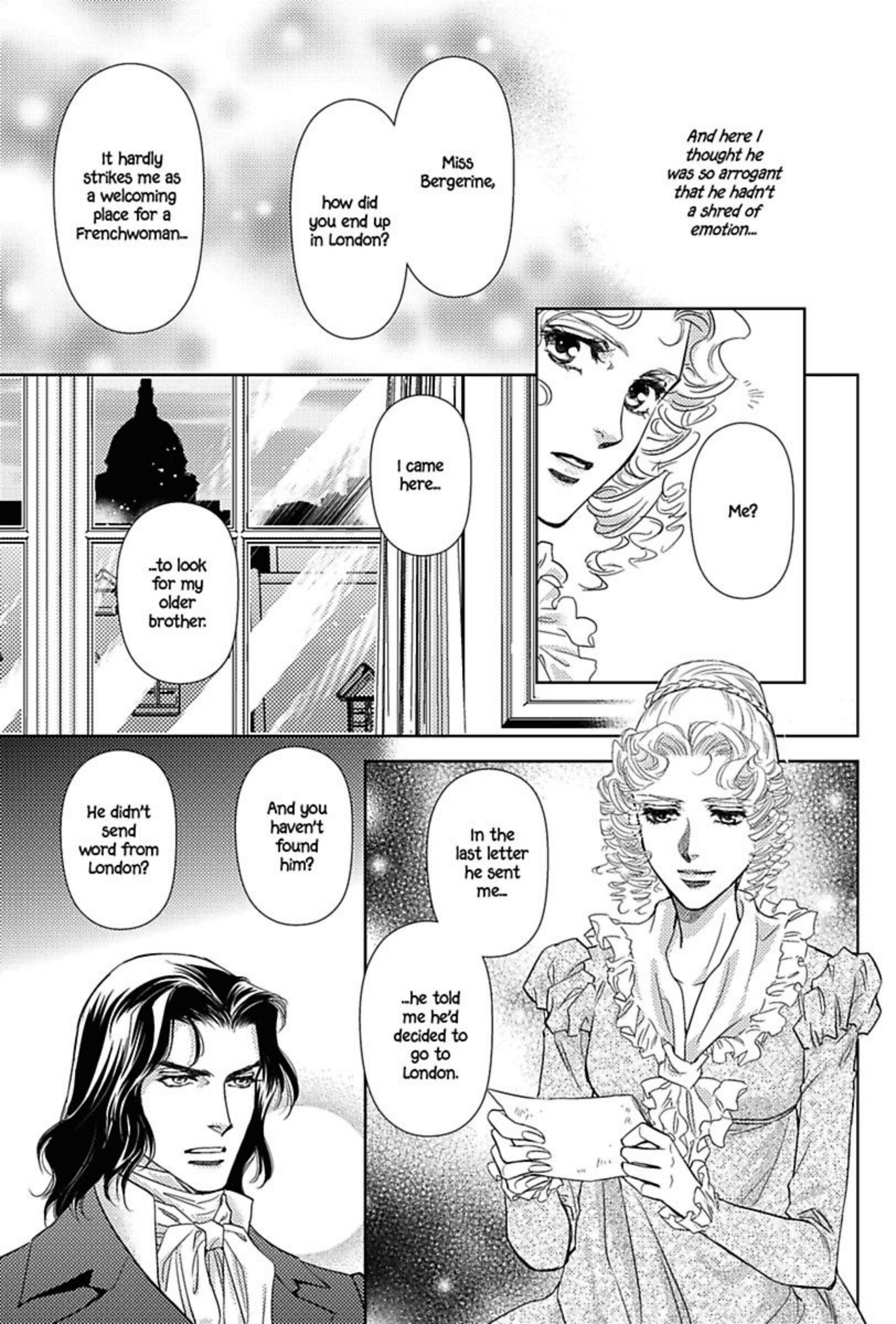

Well, we've broadened the scope of our investigation, and there are *some* ideas, but...
...I'm sure you must be quite worried for your cousin's safety, Baronet.
So, you've heard of my cousin, have you...?
I have! My younger sister is a seamstress, you see.
Apparently, there's been quite a bit of buzz about what a charming young lady she is!
Charming...?
ガラ Clack
ガラ Clack
ガラ Clack
ガラ Clack
ガラ Clack
ガラ Clack
Charming! A noisy, unstable woman...
...who pelted a gang of ruffians with potatoes!
One of which found its way to me, no doubt...

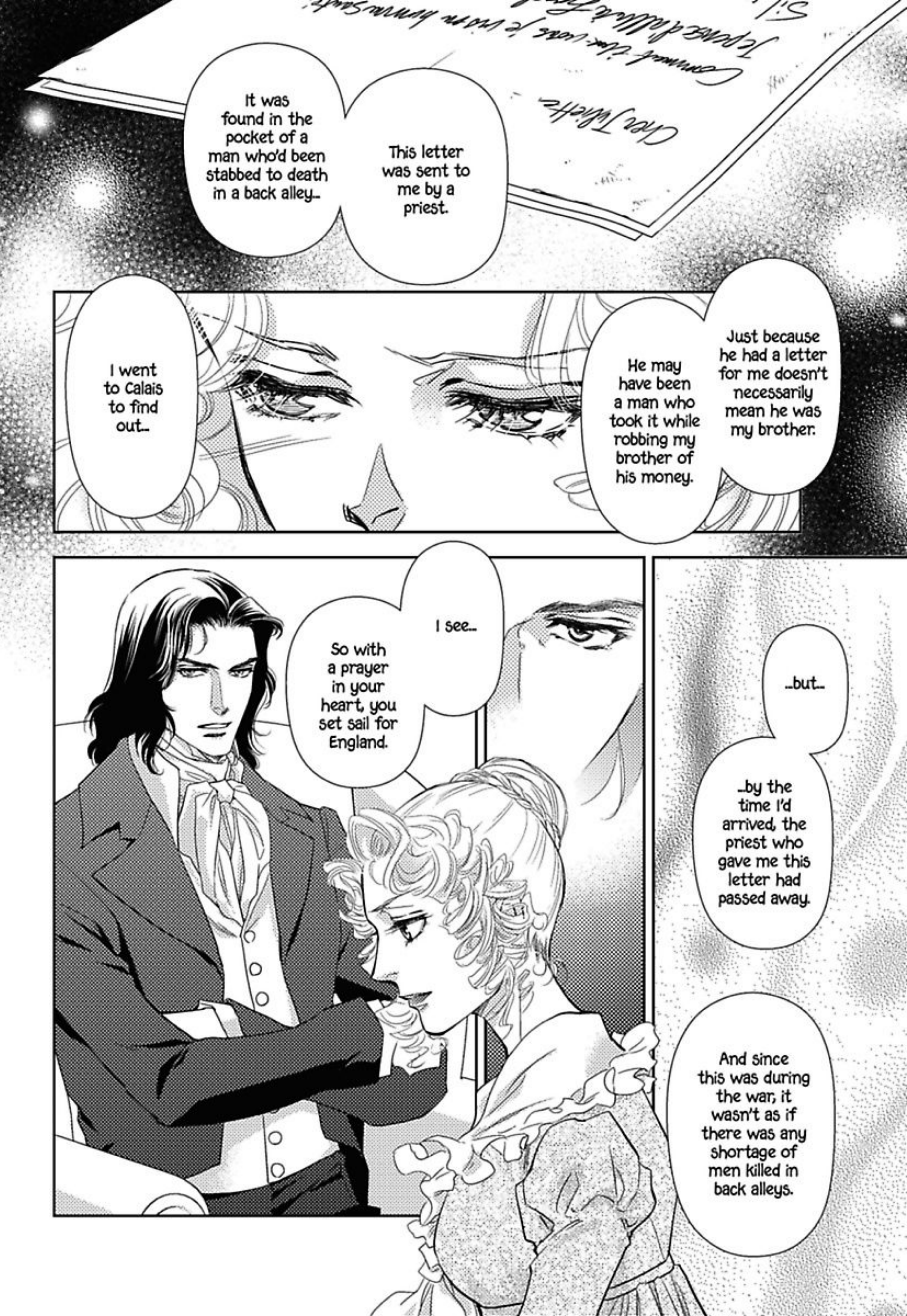

That must be it.
...
Why else, after all...
...would I have seen that Miss Bergerine as an angel come to save me?
Let alone taken her in my arms and kissed her...
Well, then.
I'll be in the living room.
Sir Douglas!
Merde!

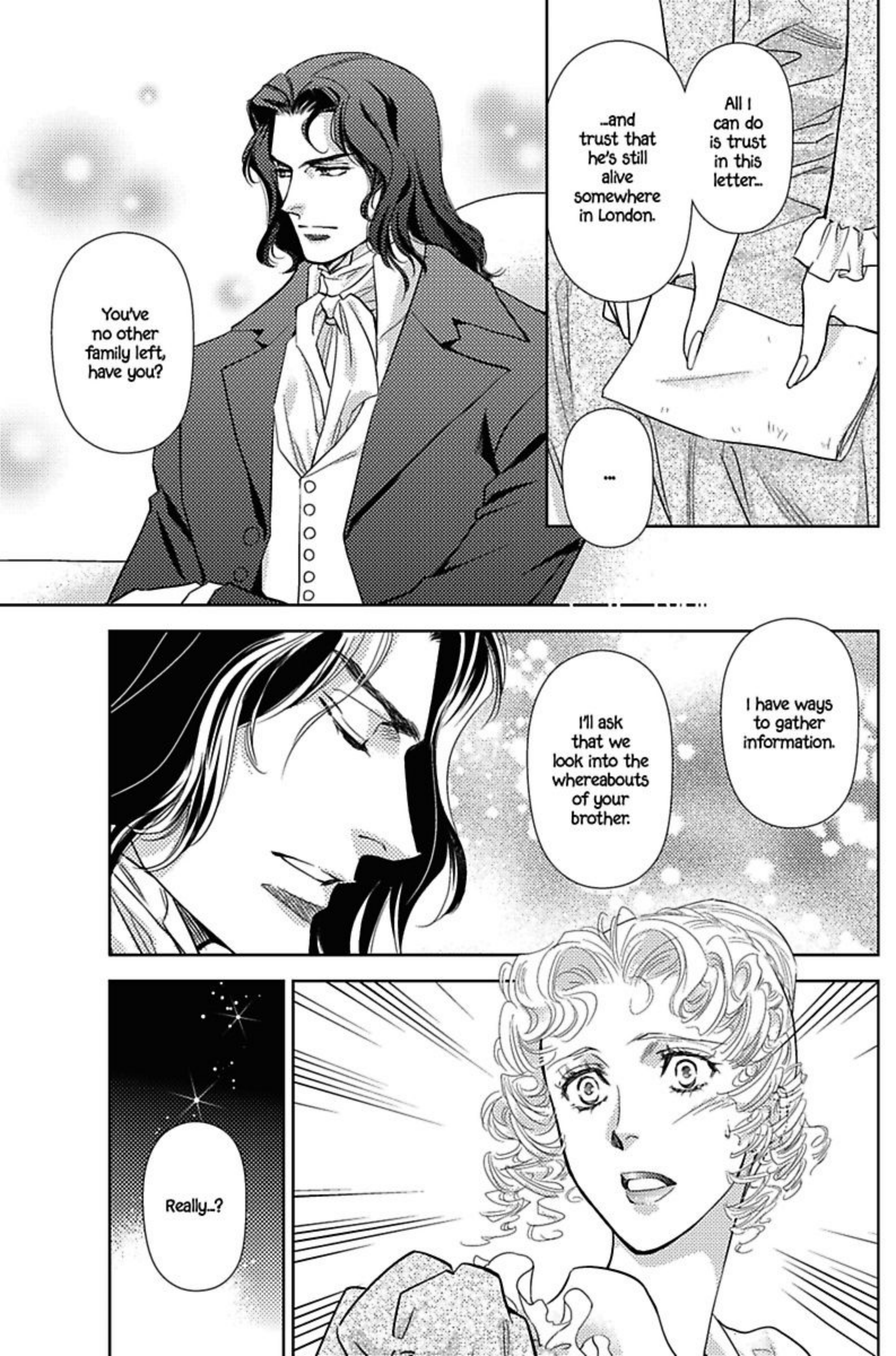

Miss Bergerine…
I won't eat you alive, you know. Relax.
…
I just can't get used to having so little to do,
so I asked to be allowed to help with the sewing.
You asked Buggy?
Non.
I asked the maid, Miss Tanvaro.

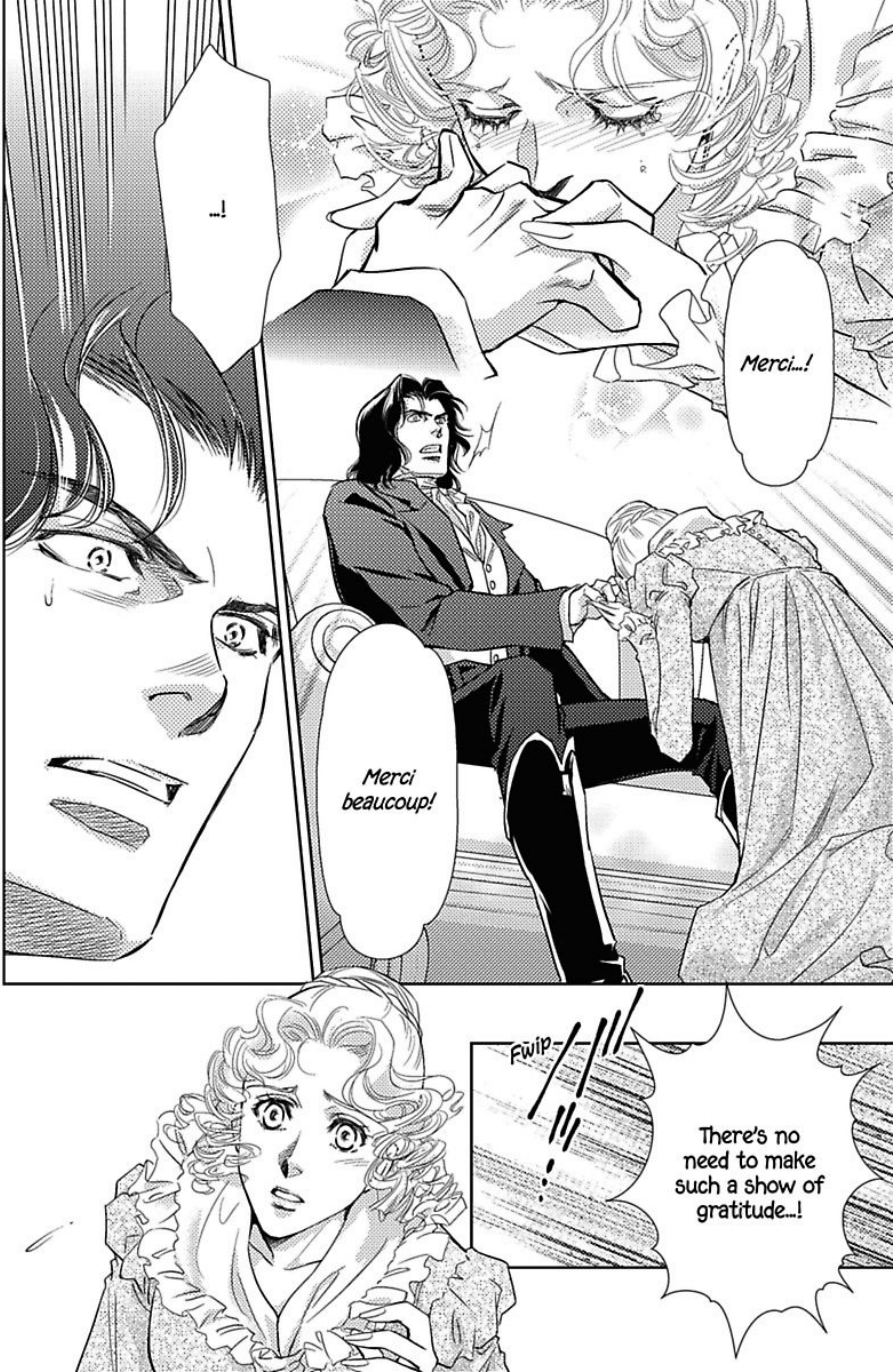

I can't possibly ask the viscount's guest to exert herself...!
It's not as if I proposed we make a mummy or something!
I didn't expect her to be so shocked!
That poor, poor maid...
I just...
I wanted to do *something* to show my gratitude for Lord Bromwell!
If he hadn't so generously taken me in, then I'd be...
...

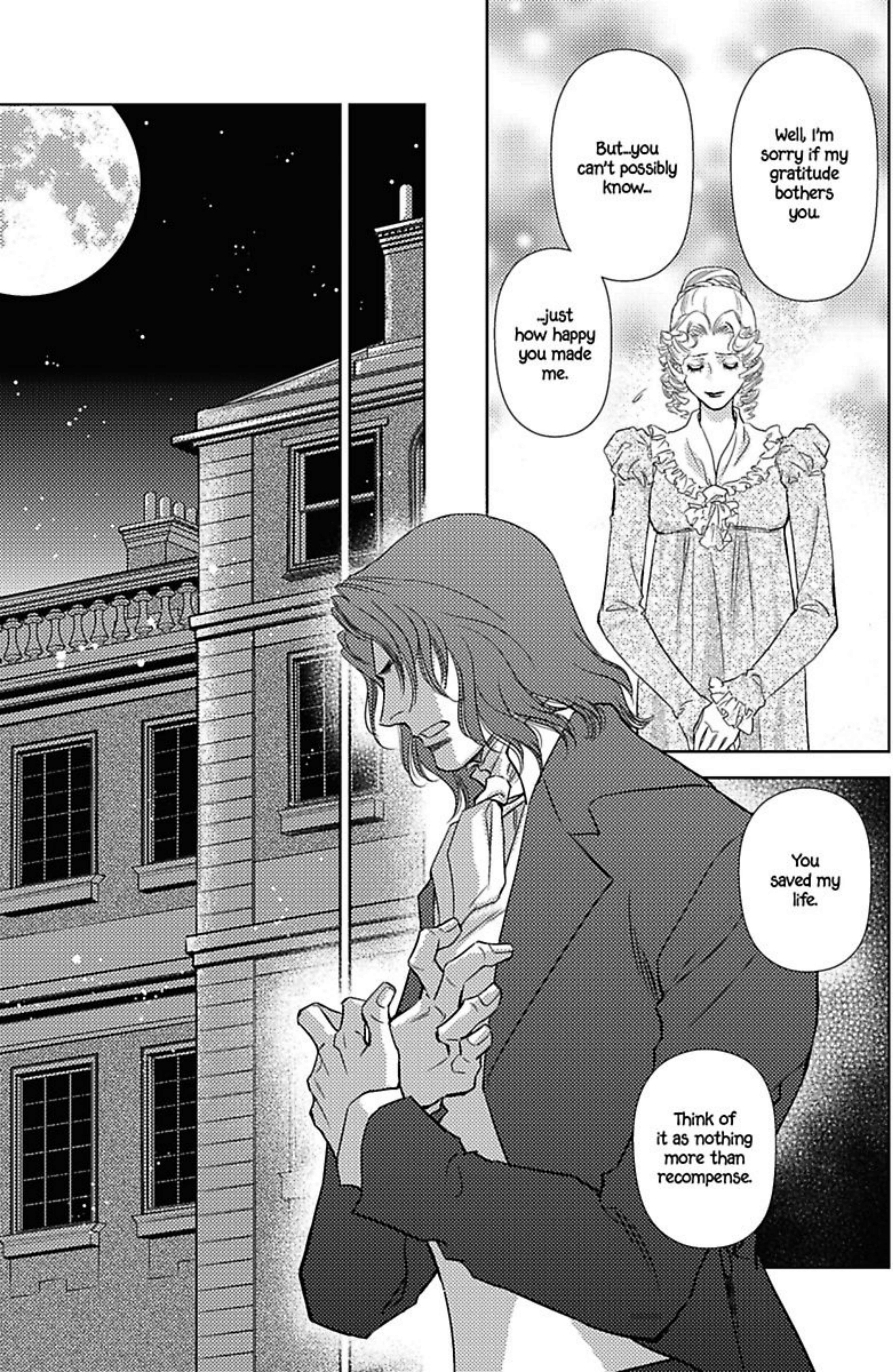

Which reminds me,
why do you call Lord Bromwell "Buggy," anyway?
That hardly seems like a fitting nickname...
Did Buggy tell you he's a natural historian?
He focuses his studies on spiders, mostly.
Spiders...?
He's always been a touch obsessed with them.
So much so that he kept a jar full of spiders by his bedside as a student.
That's how he got the nickname.
...
That's a gentler face than I've seen him make before...

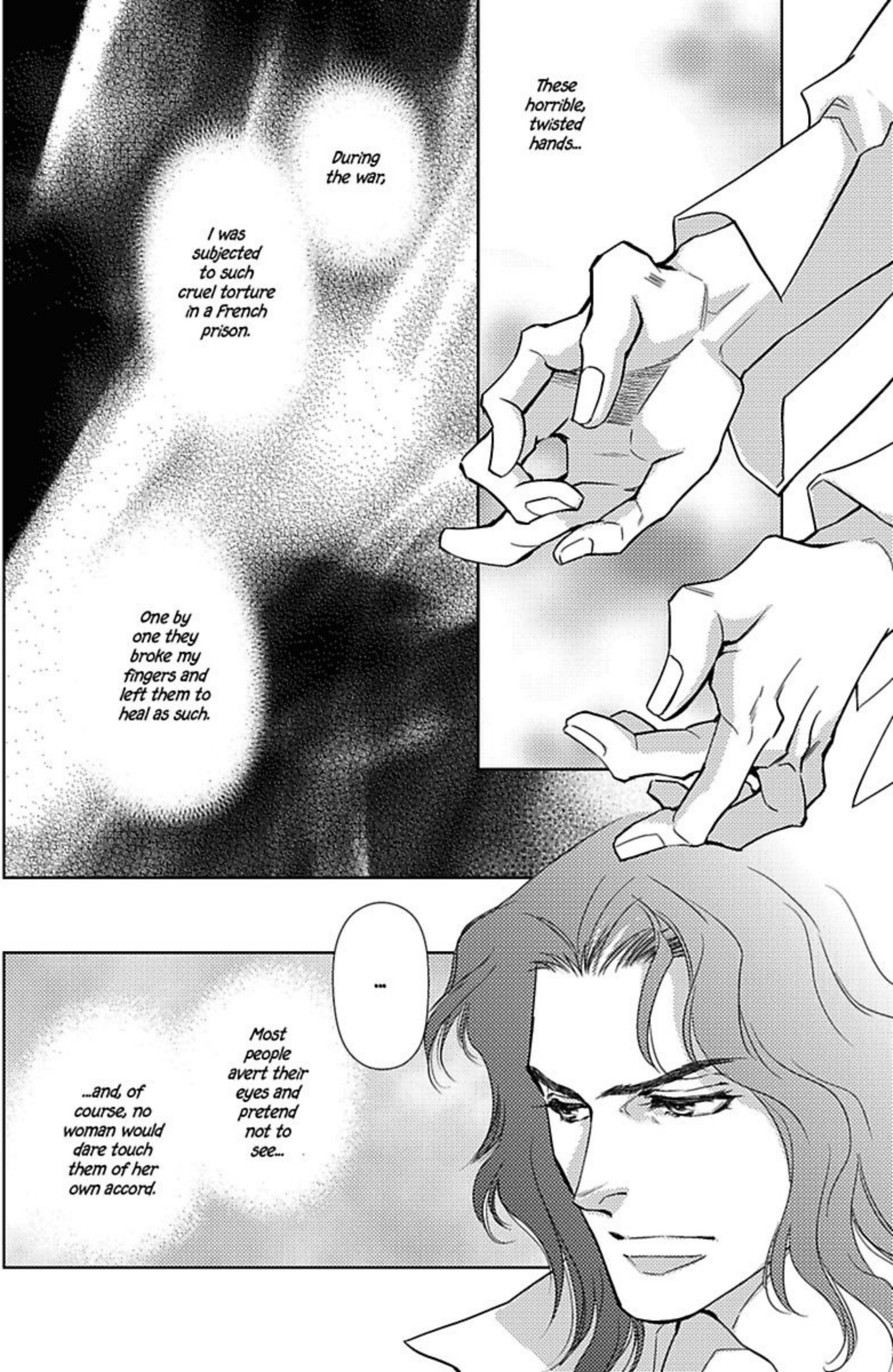

And here I thought he was so arrogant that he hadn't a shred of emotion...
Miss Bergerine, how did you end up in London?
It hardly strikes me as a welcoming place for a Frenchwoman...
Me?
I came here...
...to look for my older brother.
In the last letter he sent me...
...he told me he'd decided to go to London.
And you haven't found him?
He didn't send word from London?

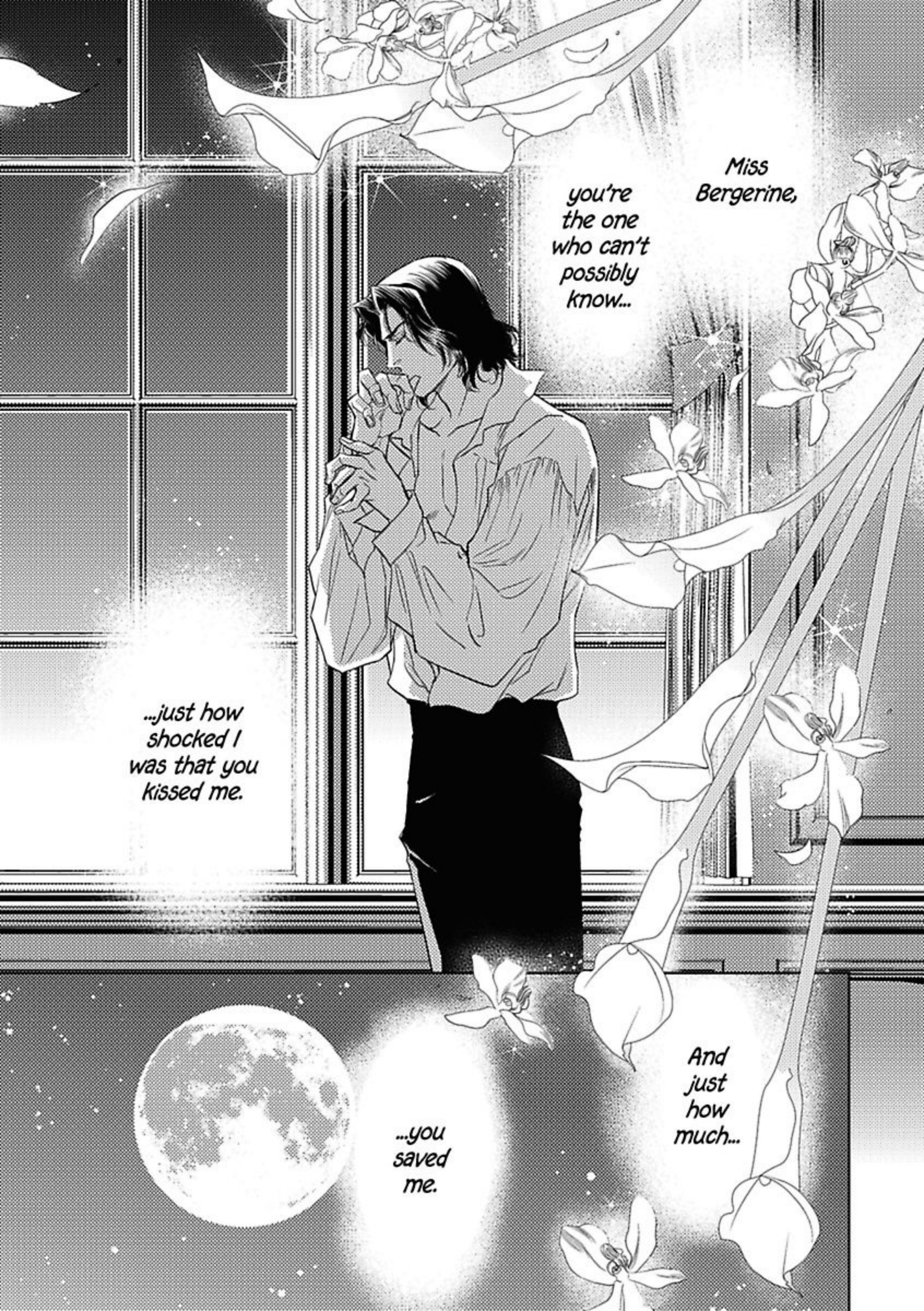

Chère Juliette,
This letter was sent to me by a priest.
It was found in the pocket of a man who'd been stabbed to death in a back alley...
Just because he had a letter for me doesn't necessarily mean he was my brother.
He may have been a man who took it while robbing my brother of his money.
I went to Calais to find out...
...but...
...by the time I'd arrived, the priest who gave me this letter had passed away.
And since this was during the war, it wasn't as if there was any shortage of men killed in back alleys.
I see...
So with a prayer in your heart, you set sail for England.

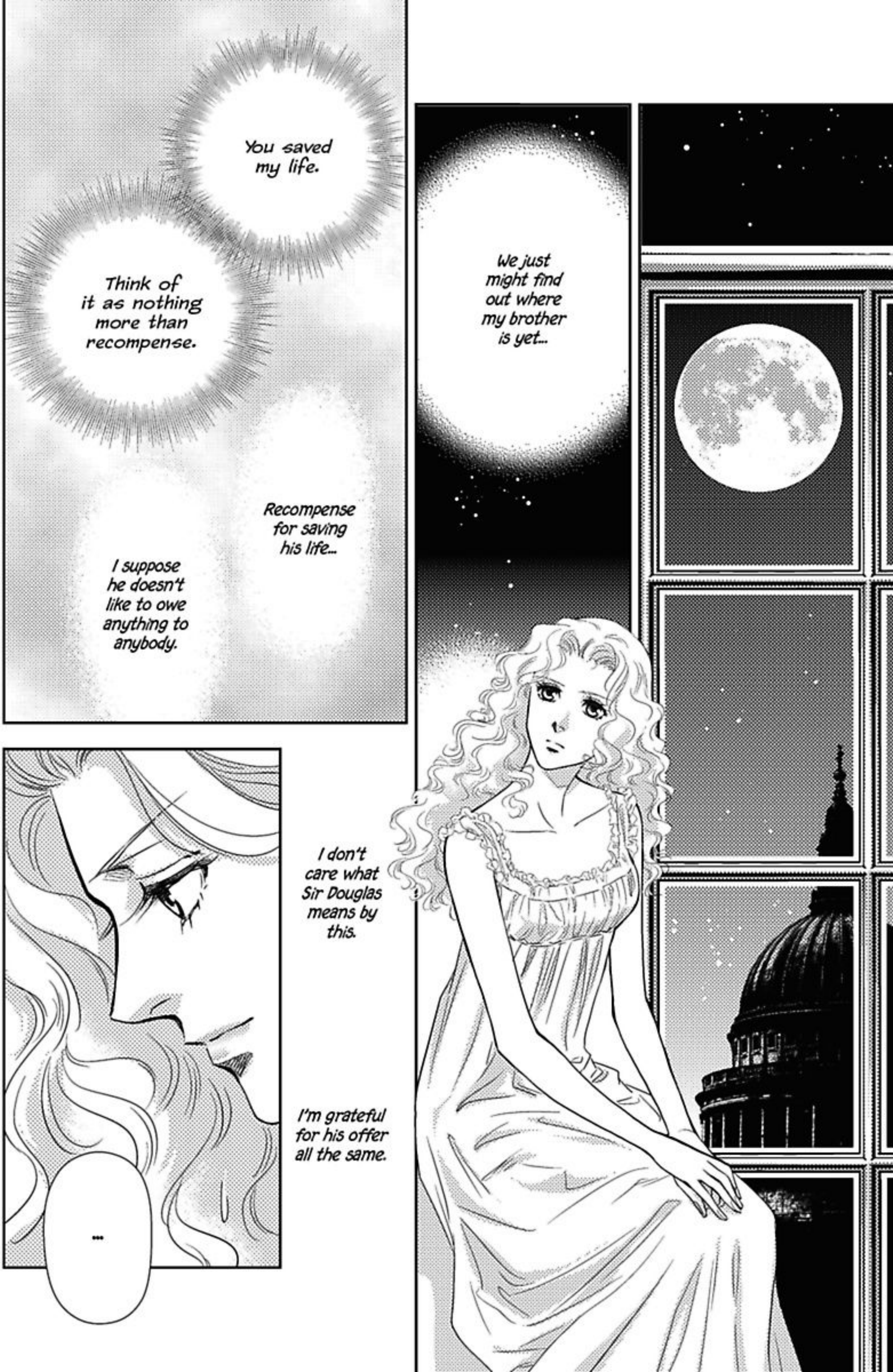

All I can do is trust in this letter...
...and trust that he's still alive somewhere in London.
...
You've no other family left, have you?
I have ways to gather information.
I'll ask that we look into the whereabouts of your brother.
Really...?

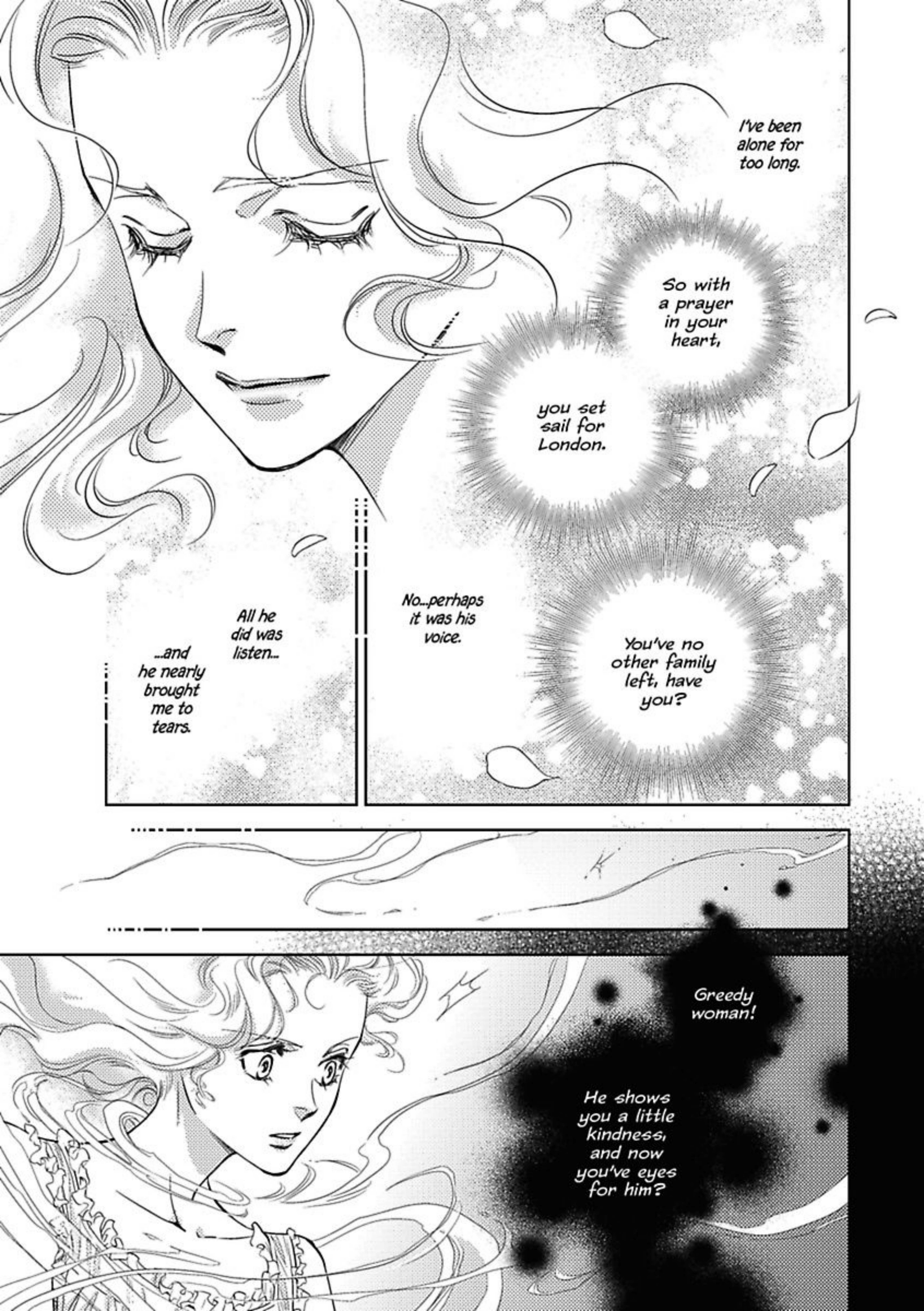

Merci...!
Merci beaucoup!
...!
Fwip
There's no need to make such a show of gratitude...!

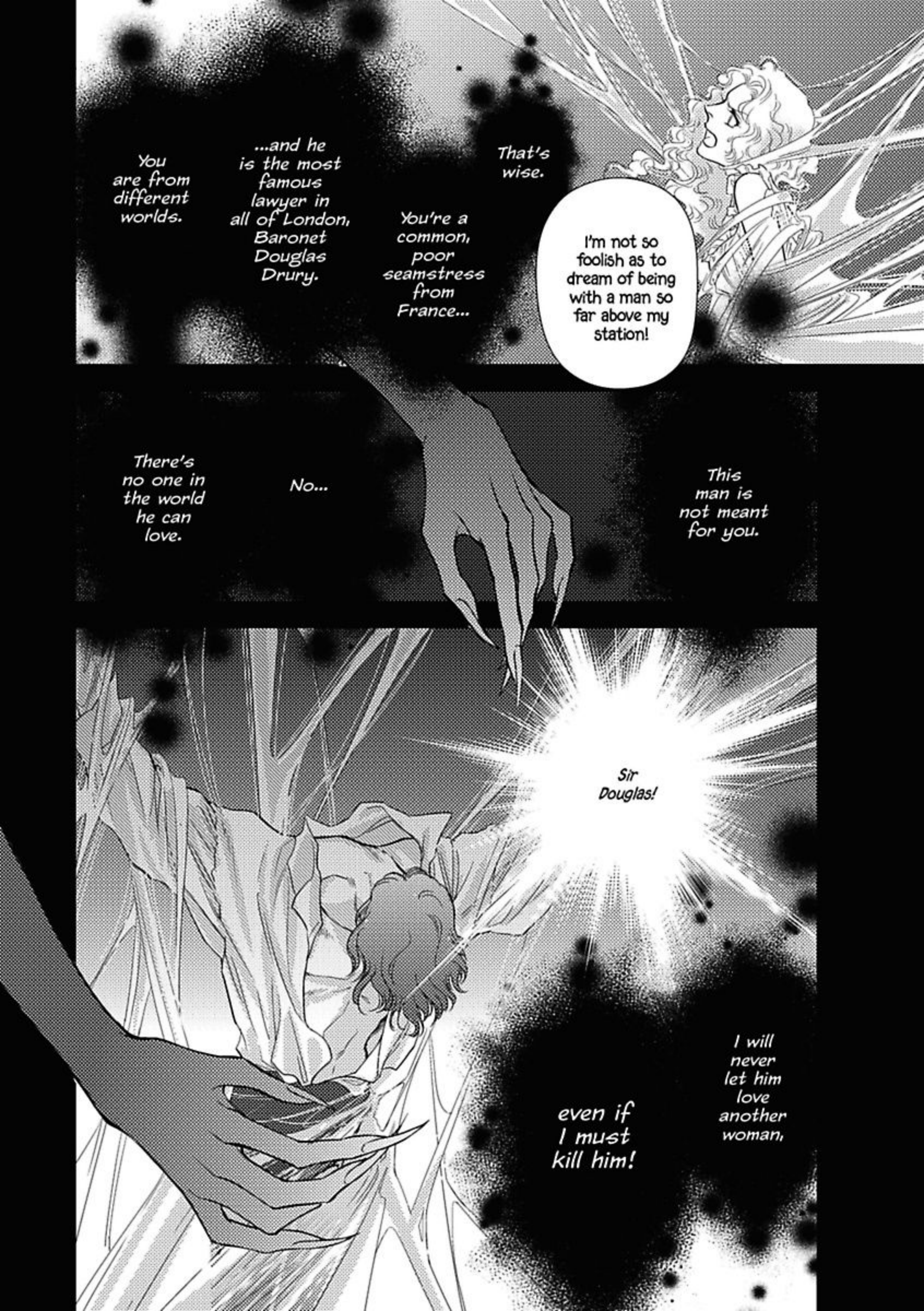

Well, I'm sorry if my gratitude bothers you.
But...you can't possibly know...
...just how happy you made me.
You saved my life.
Think of it as nothing more than recompense.

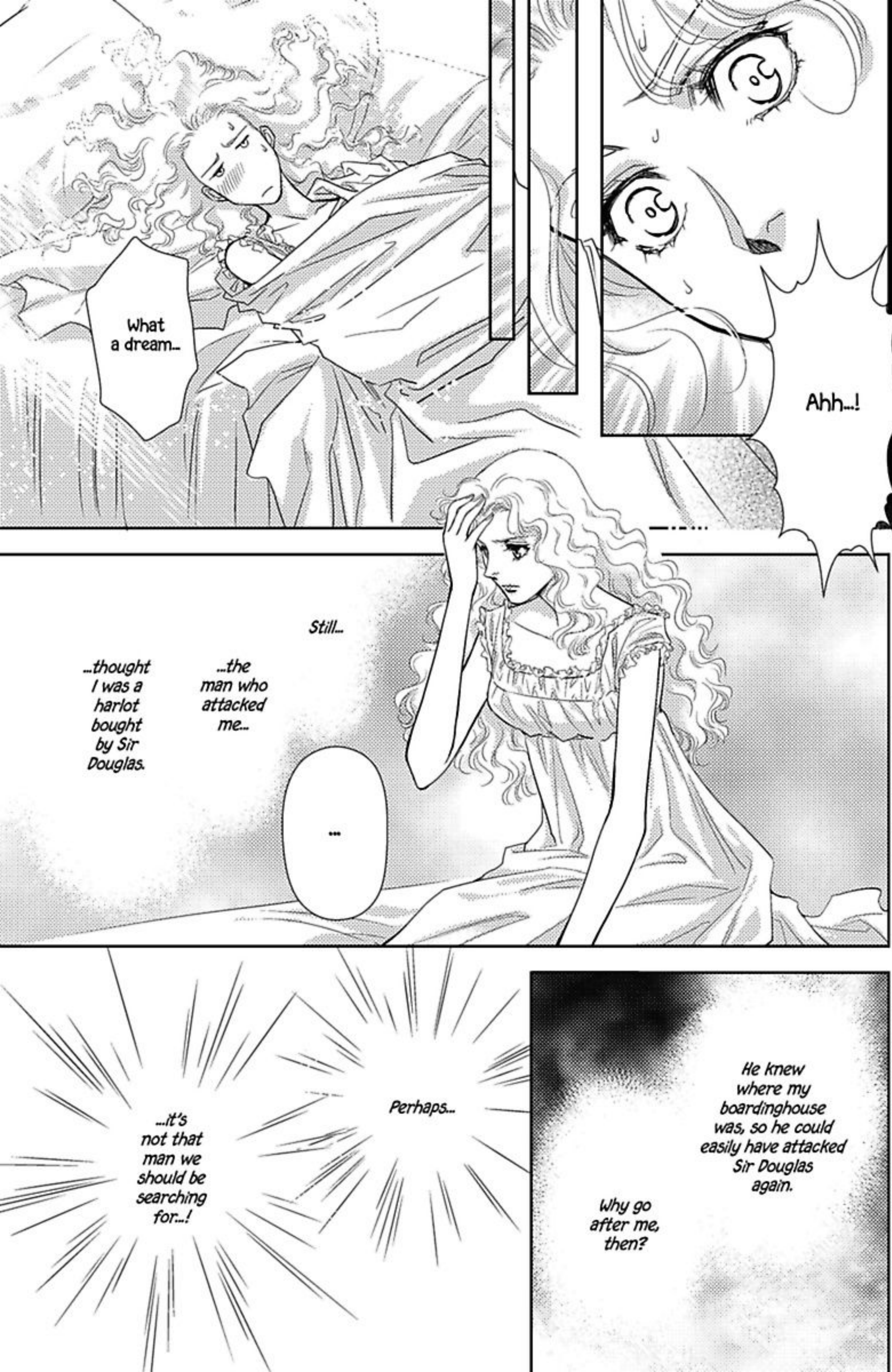

These horrible, twisted hands...
During the war,
I was subjected to such cruel torture in a French prison.
One by one they broke my fingers and left them to heal as such.
...
Most people avert their eyes and pretend not to see...
...and, of course, no woman would dare touch them of her own accord.

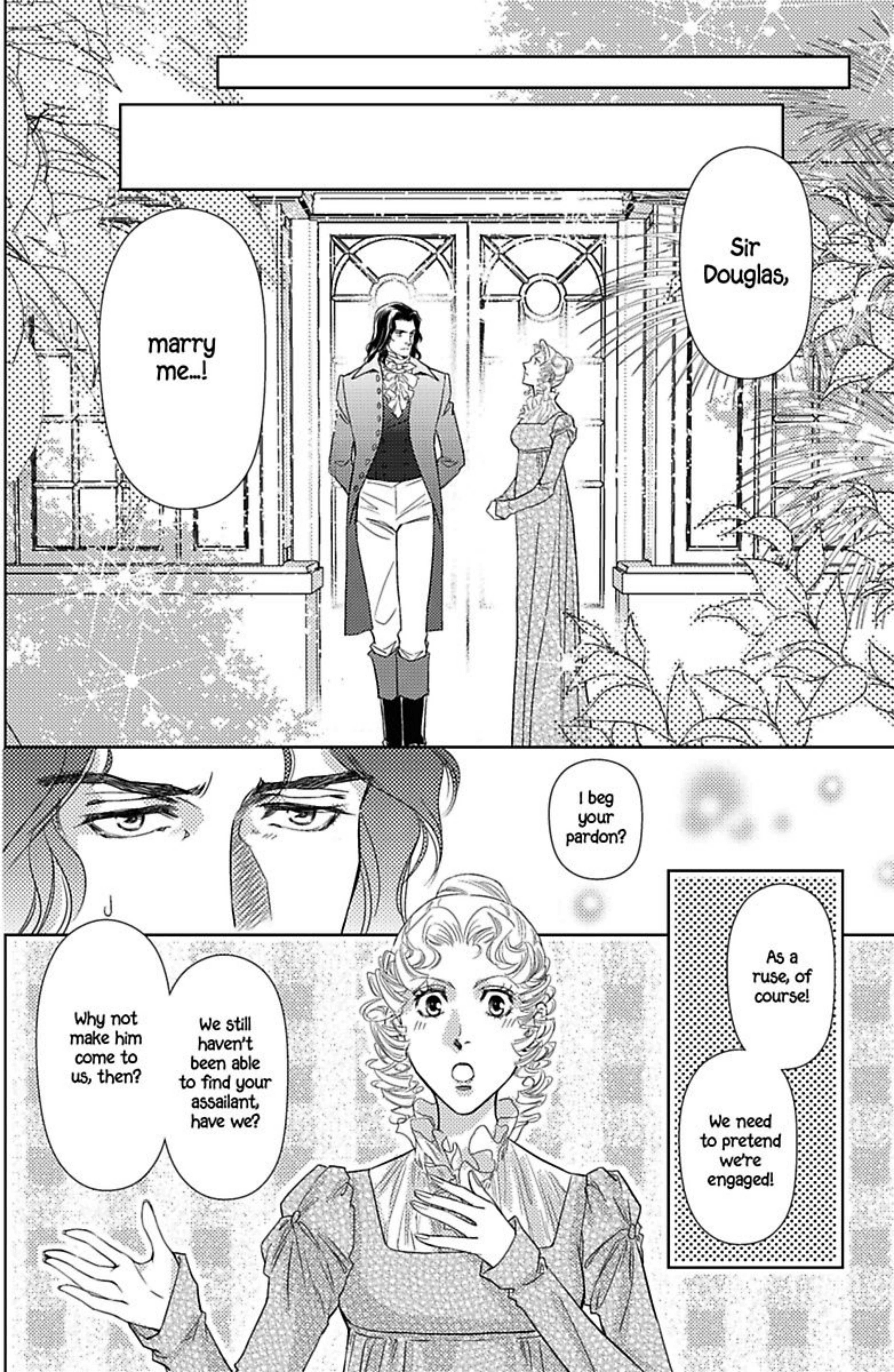

Miss Bergerine,
you're the one who can't possibly know...
...just how shocked I was that you kissed me.
And just how much...
...you saved me.

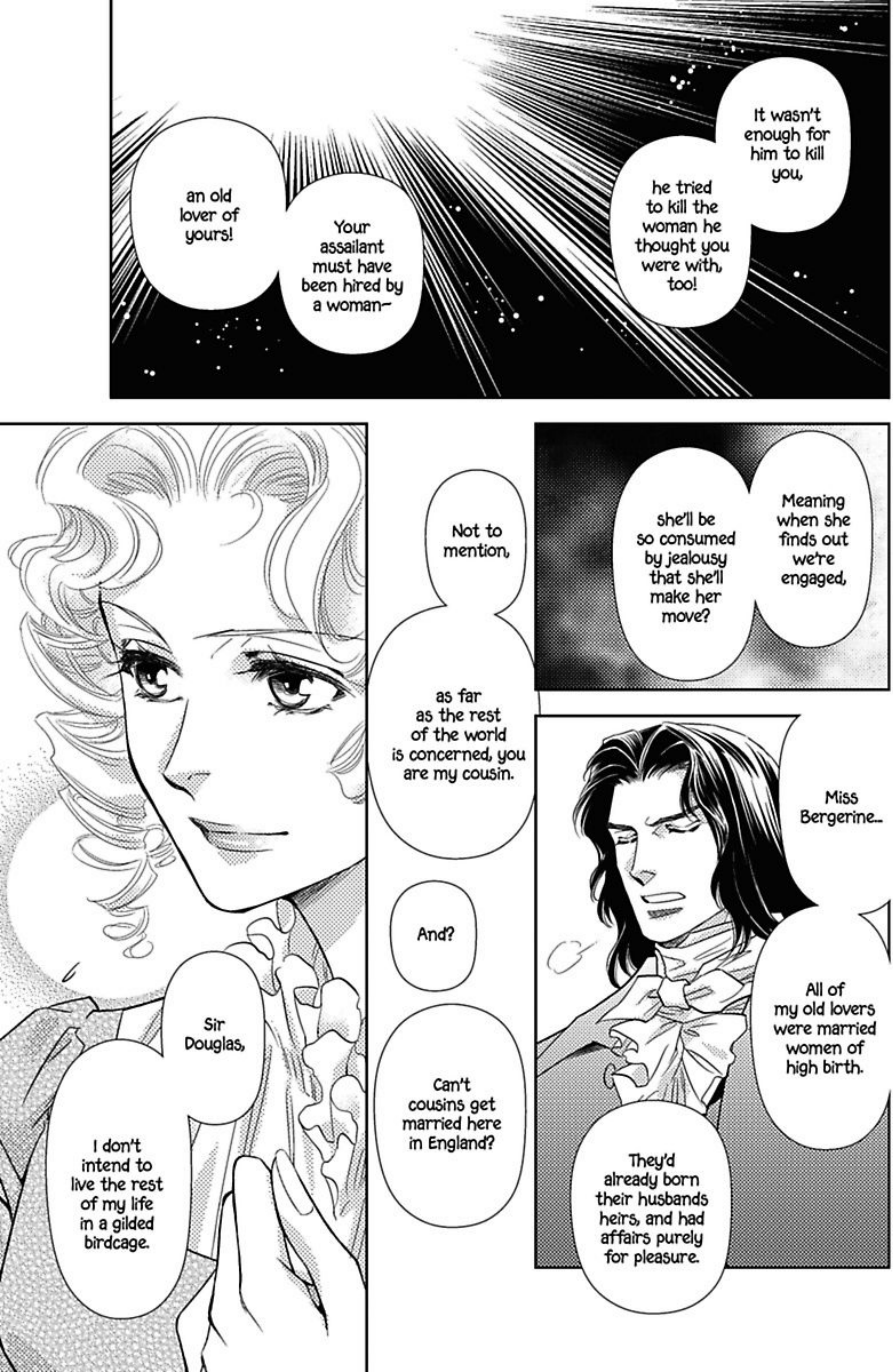

You saved my life.
Think of it as nothing more than recompense.
Recompense for saving his life...
I suppose he doesn't like to owe anything to anybody.
We just might find out where my brother is yet...
I don't care what Sir Douglas means by this.
I'm grateful for his offer all the same.
...

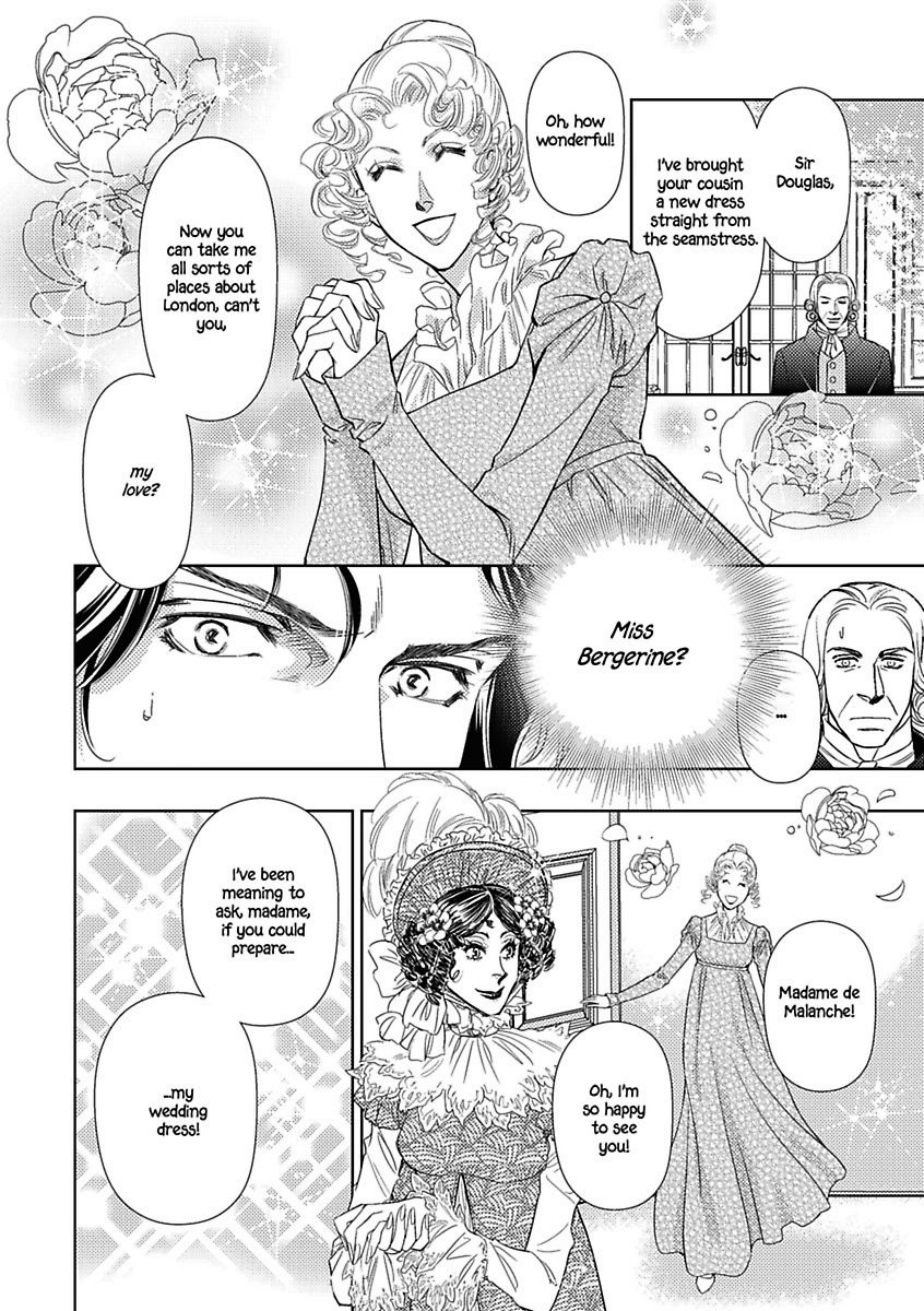

I've been alone for too long.
So with a prayer in your heart,
you set sail for London.
You've no other family left, have you?
No...perhaps it was his voice.
All he did was listen...
...and he nearly brought me to tears.
Greedy woman!
He shows you a little kindness, and now you've eyes for him?

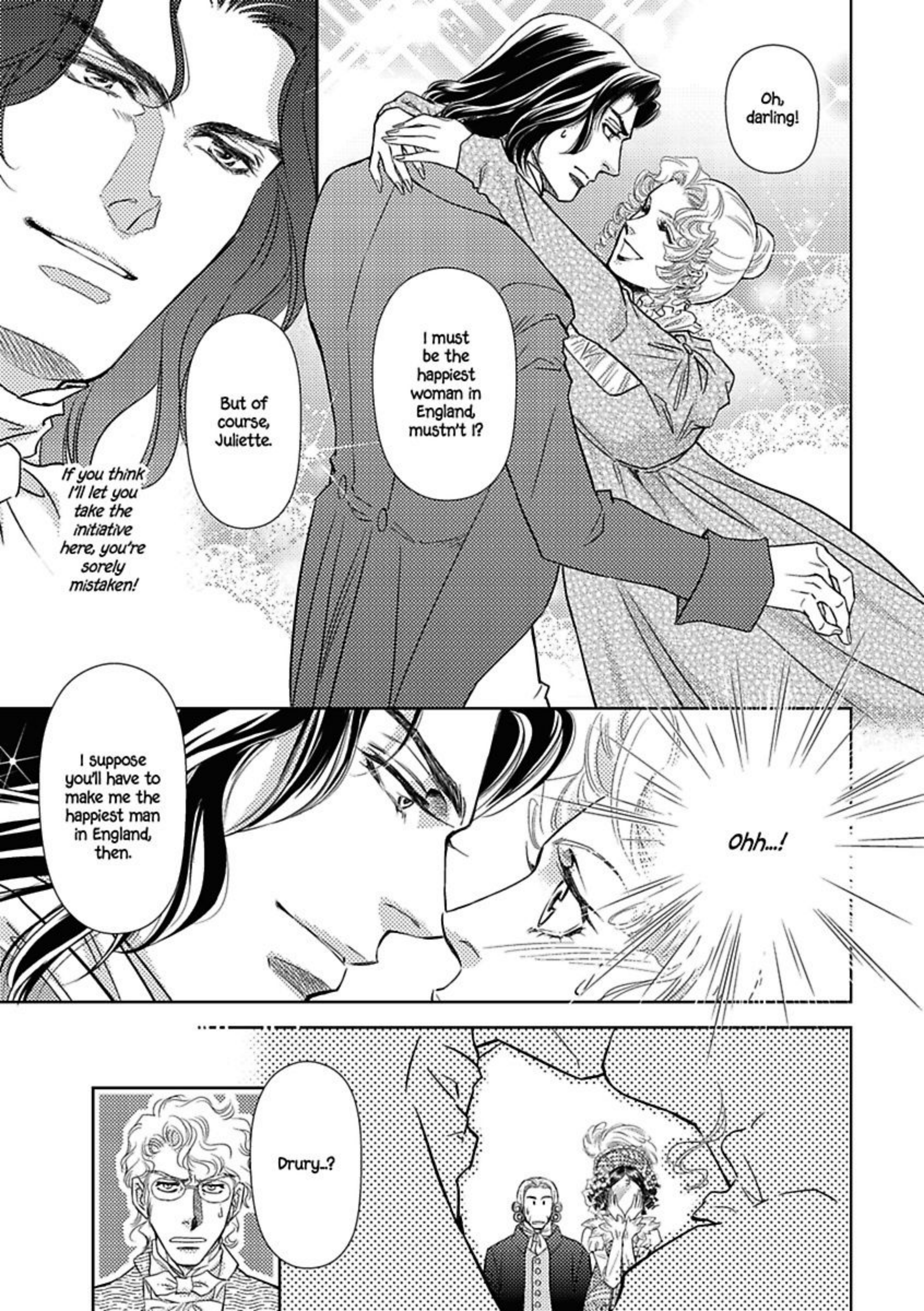

I'm not so foolish as to dream of being with a man so far above my station!
That's wise.
You're a common, poor seamstress from France...
...and he is the most famous lawyer in all of London, Baronet Douglas Drury.
You are from different worlds.
This man is not meant for you.
No...
There's no one in the world he can love.
Sir Douglas!
I will never let him love another woman,
even if I must kill him!

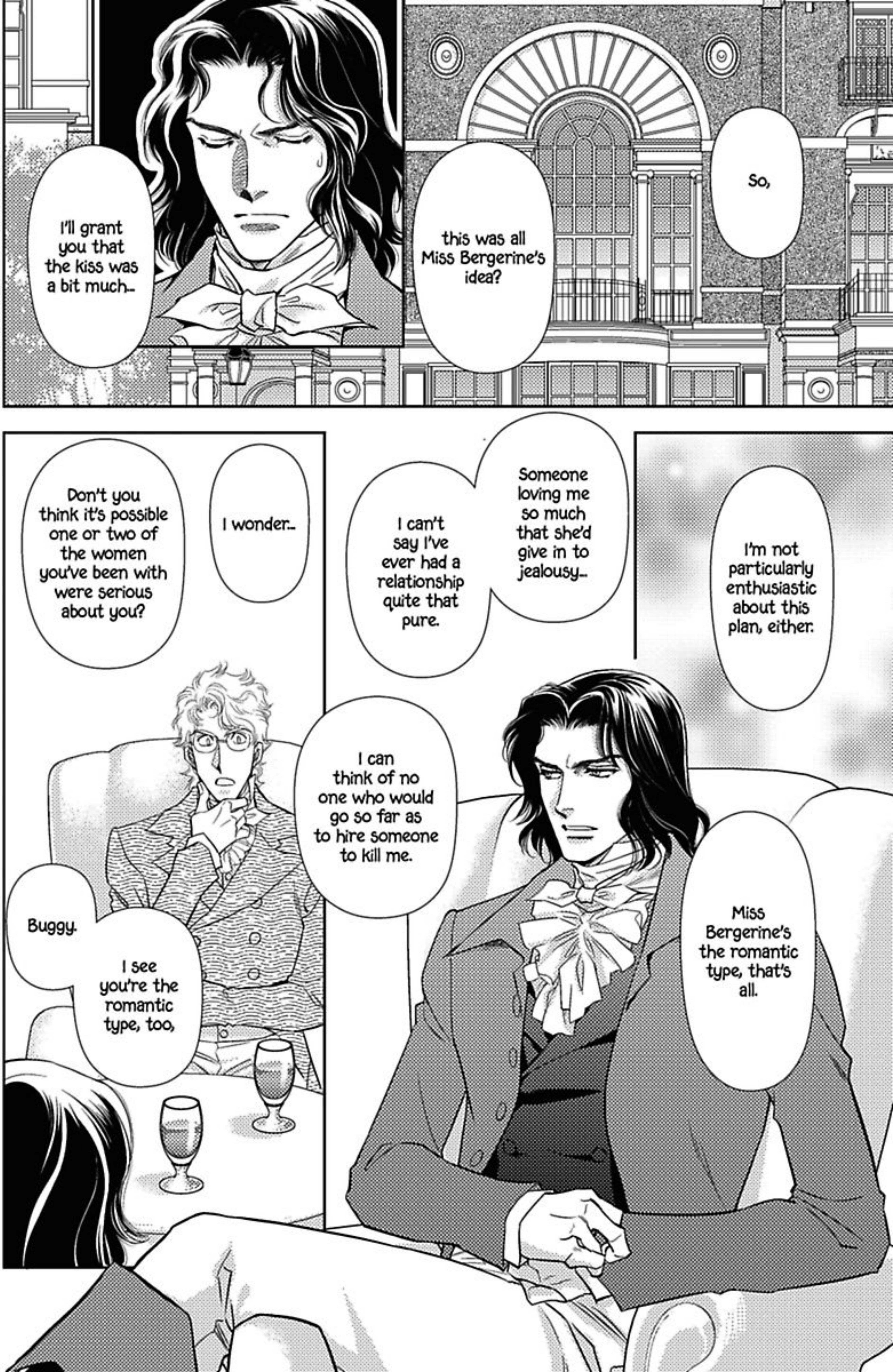

Ahh...!
What a dream...
Still...
...the man who attacked me...
...thought I was a harlot bought by Sir Douglas.
...
He knew where my boardinghouse was, so he could easily have attacked Sir Douglas again.
Why go after me, then?
Perhaps...
...it's not that man we should be searching for...!

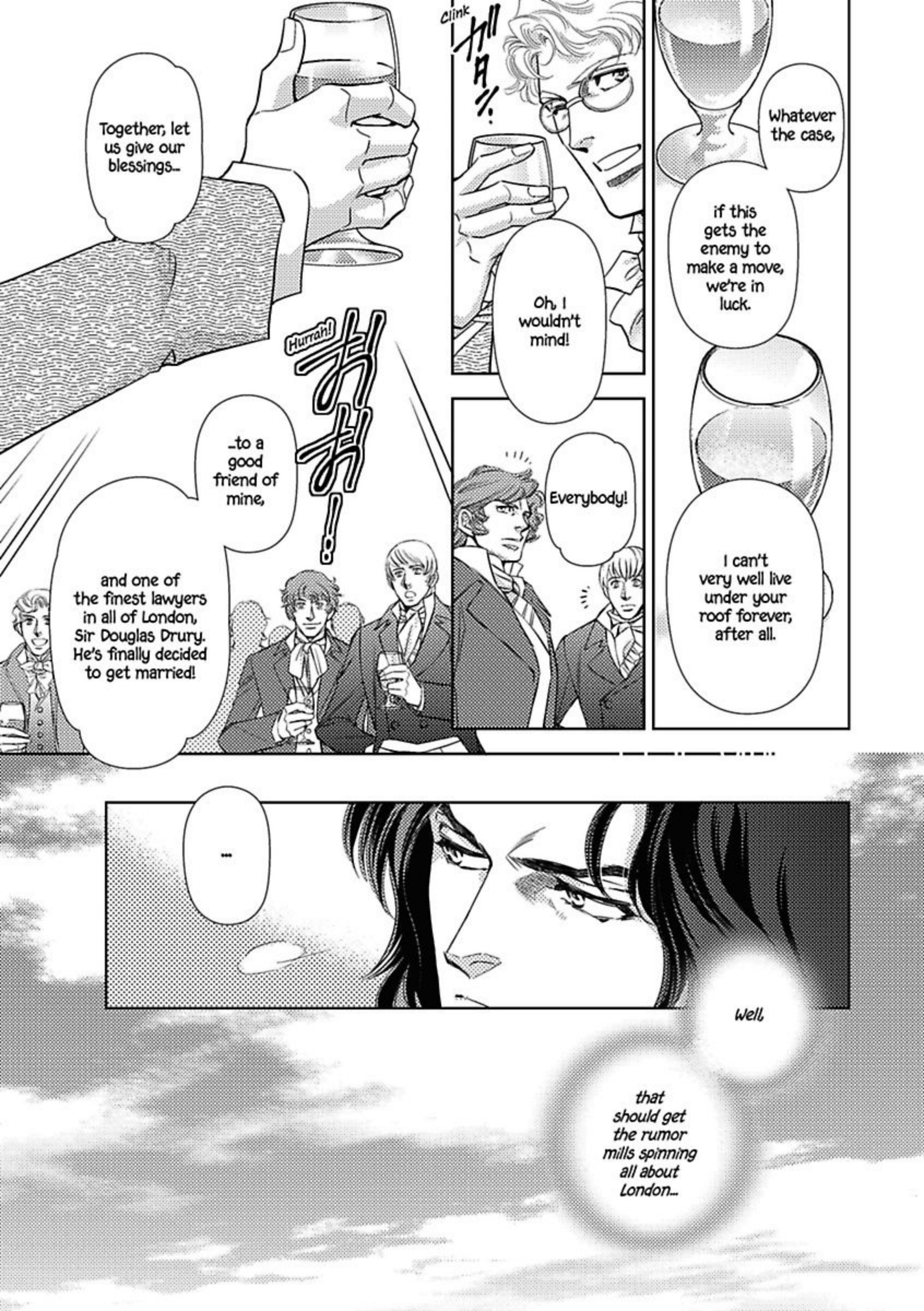

Sir Douglas,
marry me...!
I beg your pardon?
As a ruse, of course!
We need to pretend we're engaged!
We still haven't been able to find your assailant, have we?
Why not make him come to us, then?

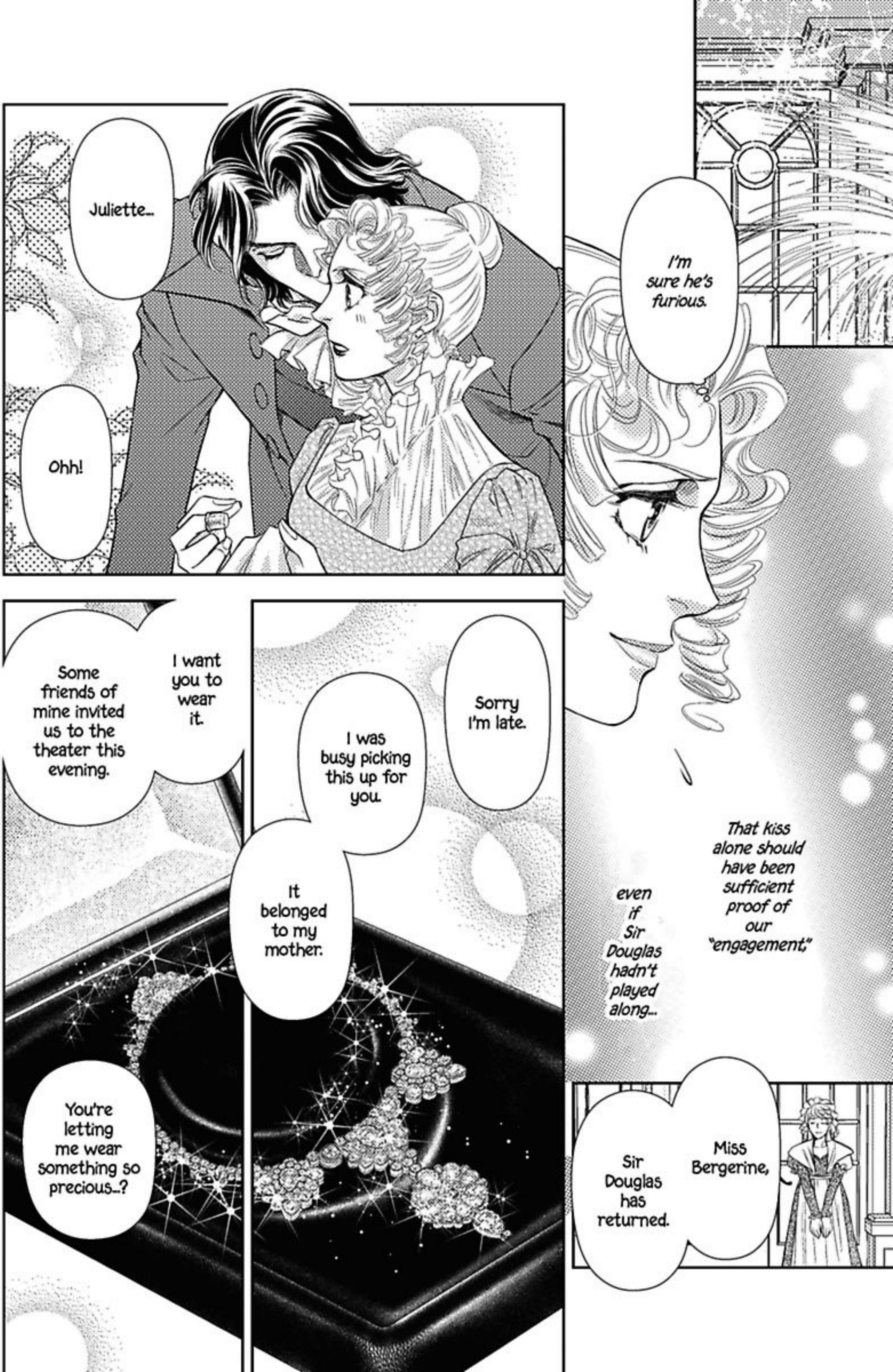

It wasn't enough for him to kill you,
he tried to kill the woman he thought you were with, too!
Your assailant must have been hired by a woman–
an old lover of yours!
Meaning when she finds out we're engaged,
she'll be so consumed by jealousy that she'll make her move?
Miss Bergerine...
All of my old lovers were married women of high birth.
They'd already born their husbands heirs, and had affairs purely for pleasure.
Not to mention,
as far as the rest of the world is concerned, you are my cousin.
And?
Can't cousins get married here in England?
Sir Douglas,
I don't intend to live the rest of my life in a gilded birdcage.

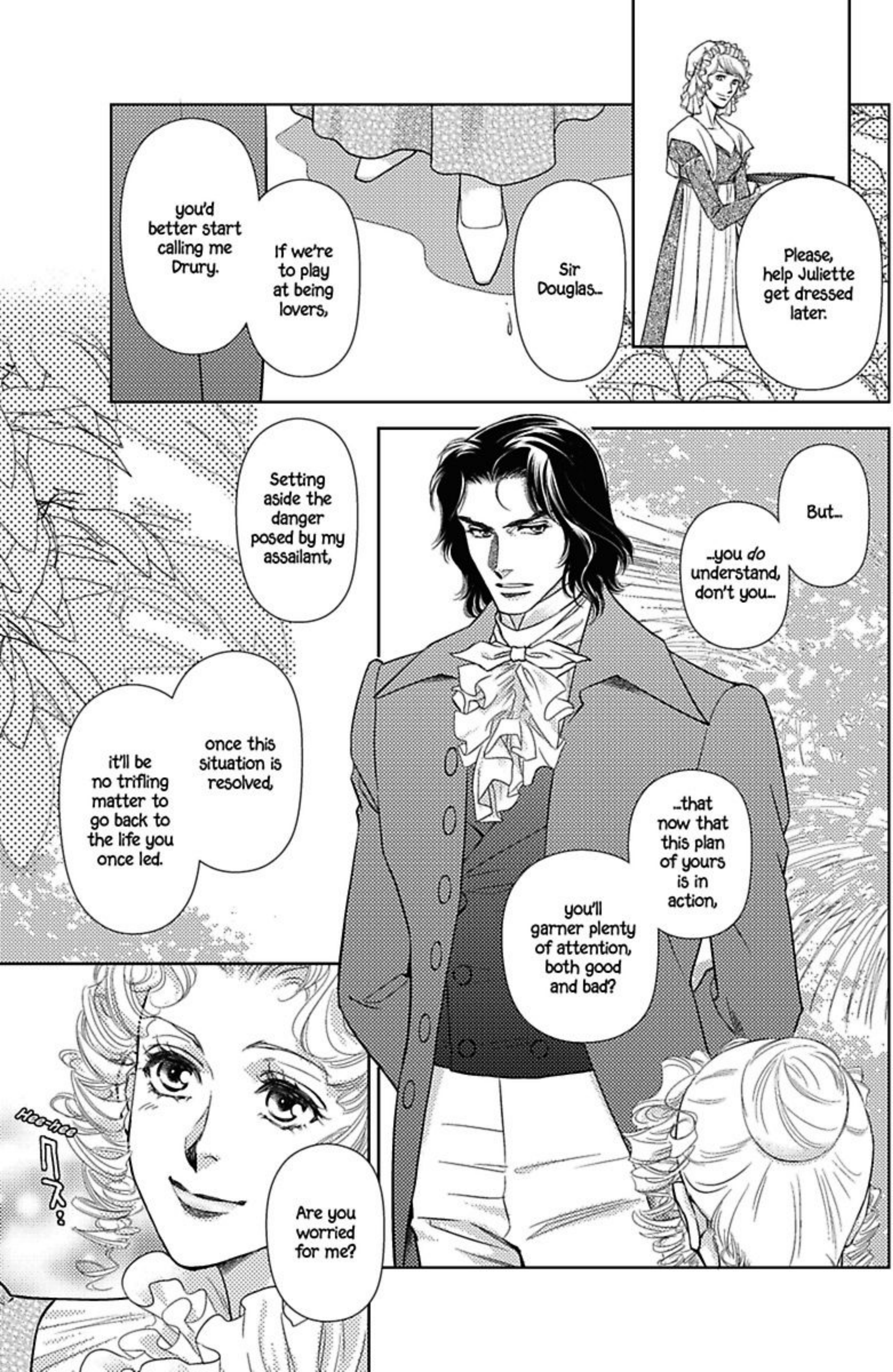

Sir Douglas,
I've brought your cousin a new dress straight from the seamstress.
Oh, how wonderful!
Now you can take me all sorts of places about London, can't you,
my love?
...
Miss Bergerine?
Madame de Malanche!
Oh, I'm so happy to see you!
I've been meaning to ask, madame, if you could prepare...
...my wedding dress!

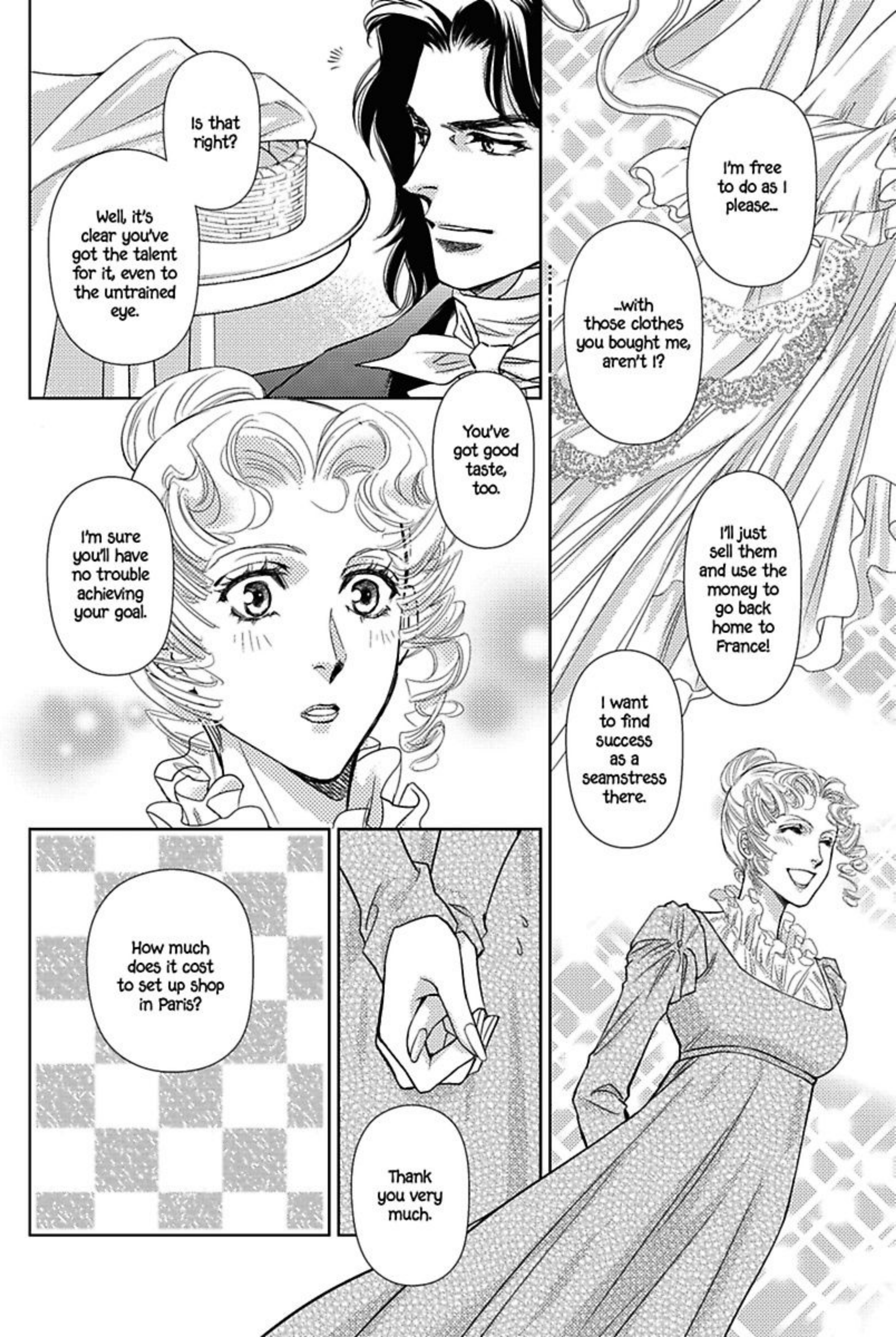

Oh, darling!
I must be the happiest woman in England, mustn't I?
But of course, Juliette.
If you think I'll let you take the initiative here, you're sorely mistaken!
I suppose you'll have to make me the happiest man in England, then.
Ohh...!
Drury...?

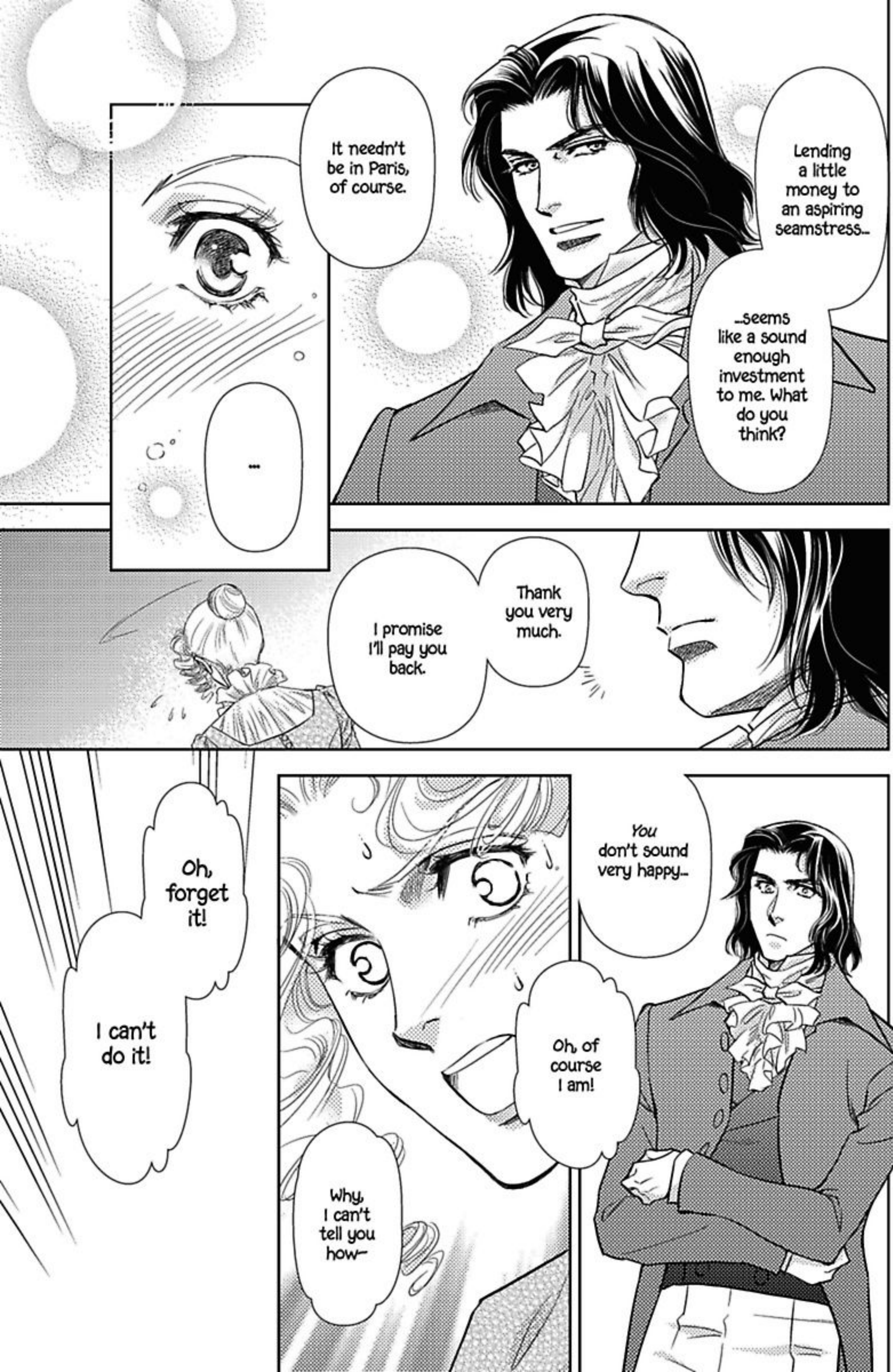

So,
this was all Miss Bergerine's idea?
I'll grant you that the kiss was a bit much...
I'm not particularly enthusiastic about this plan, either.
Miss Bergerine's the romantic type, that's all.
Someone loving me so much that she'd give in to jealousy...
I can't say I've ever had a relationship quite that pure.
I can think of no one who would go so far as to hire someone to kill me.
I wonder...
Don't you think it's possible one or two of the women you've been with were serious about you?
Buggy.
I see you're the romantic type, too,

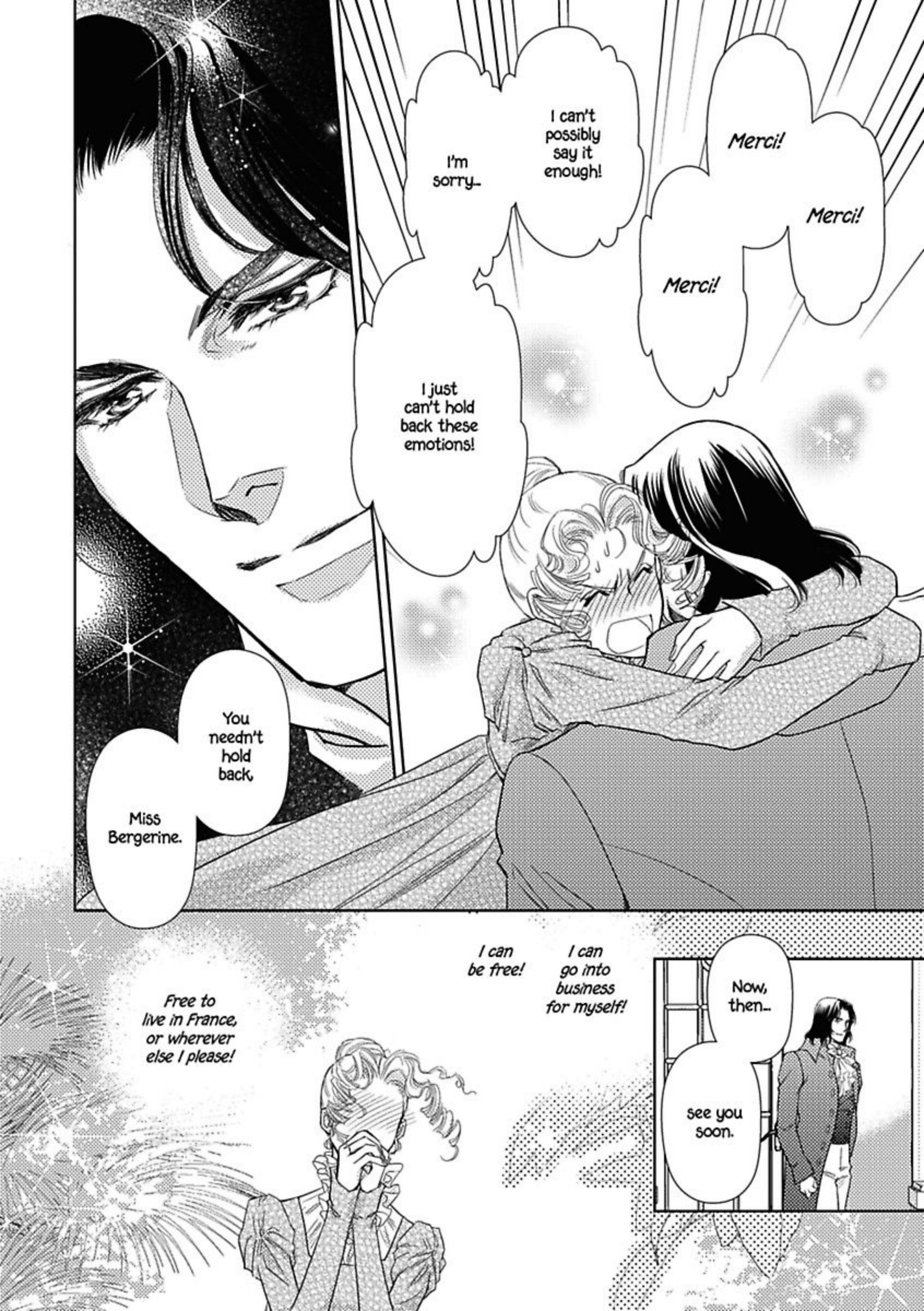

Whatever the case,
if this gets the enemy to make a move, we're in luck.
I can't very well live under your roof forever, after all.
Clink
ガタッ!
Oh, I wouldn't mind!
Everybody!
Together, let us give our blessings...
...to a good friend of mine,
and one of the finest lawyers in all of London, Sir Douglas Drury. He's finally decided to get married!
Hurrah!
おお!!
...
Well,
that should get the rumor mills spinning all about London...

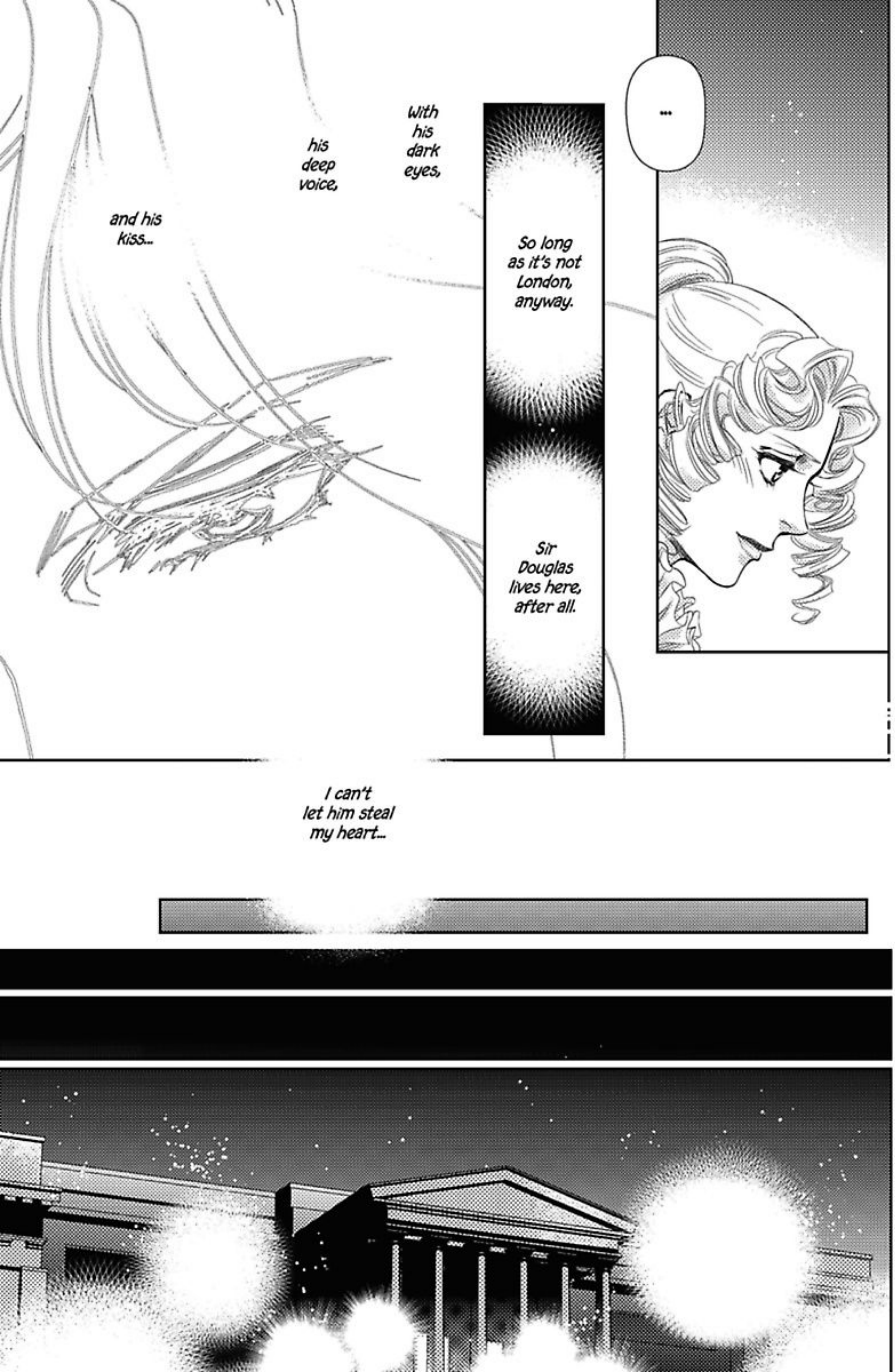

I'm sure he's furious.
That kiss alone should have been sufficient proof of our "engagement,"
even if Sir Douglas hadn't played along...
Miss Bergerine,
Sir Douglas has returned.
Juliette...
Ohh!
Sorry I'm late.
I was busy picking this up for you.
It belonged to my mother.
I want you to wear it.
Some friends of mine invited us to the theater this evening.
You're letting me wear something so precious...?

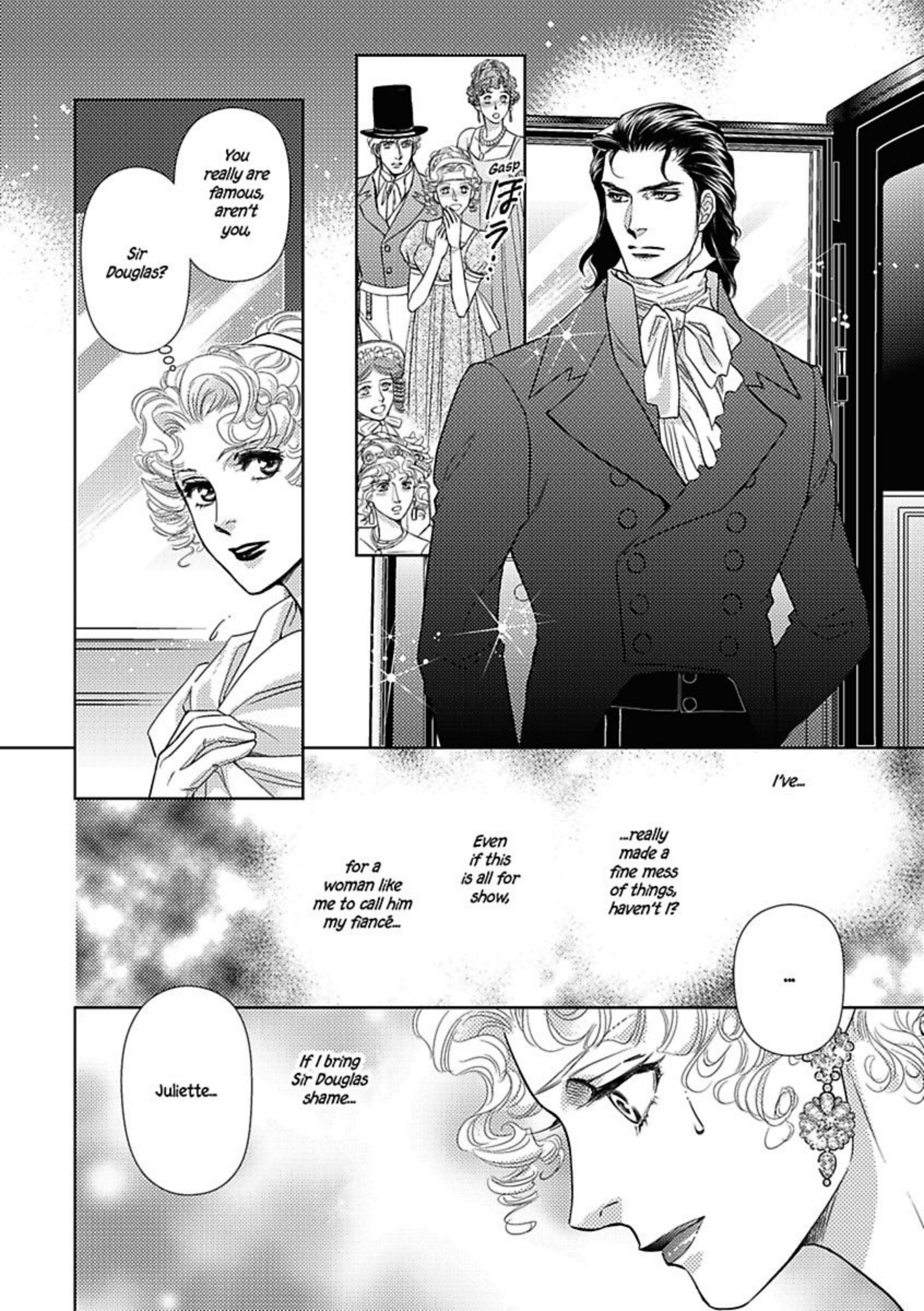

Please, help Juliette get dressed later.
Sir Douglas...
If we're to play at being lovers,
you'd better start calling me Drury.
But...
...you *do* understand, don't you...
...that now that this plan of yours is in action,
you'll garner plenty of attention, both good and bad?
Setting aside the danger posed by my assailant,
once this situation is resolved,
it'll be no trifling matter to go back to the life you once led.
Hee-hee
Are you worried for me?

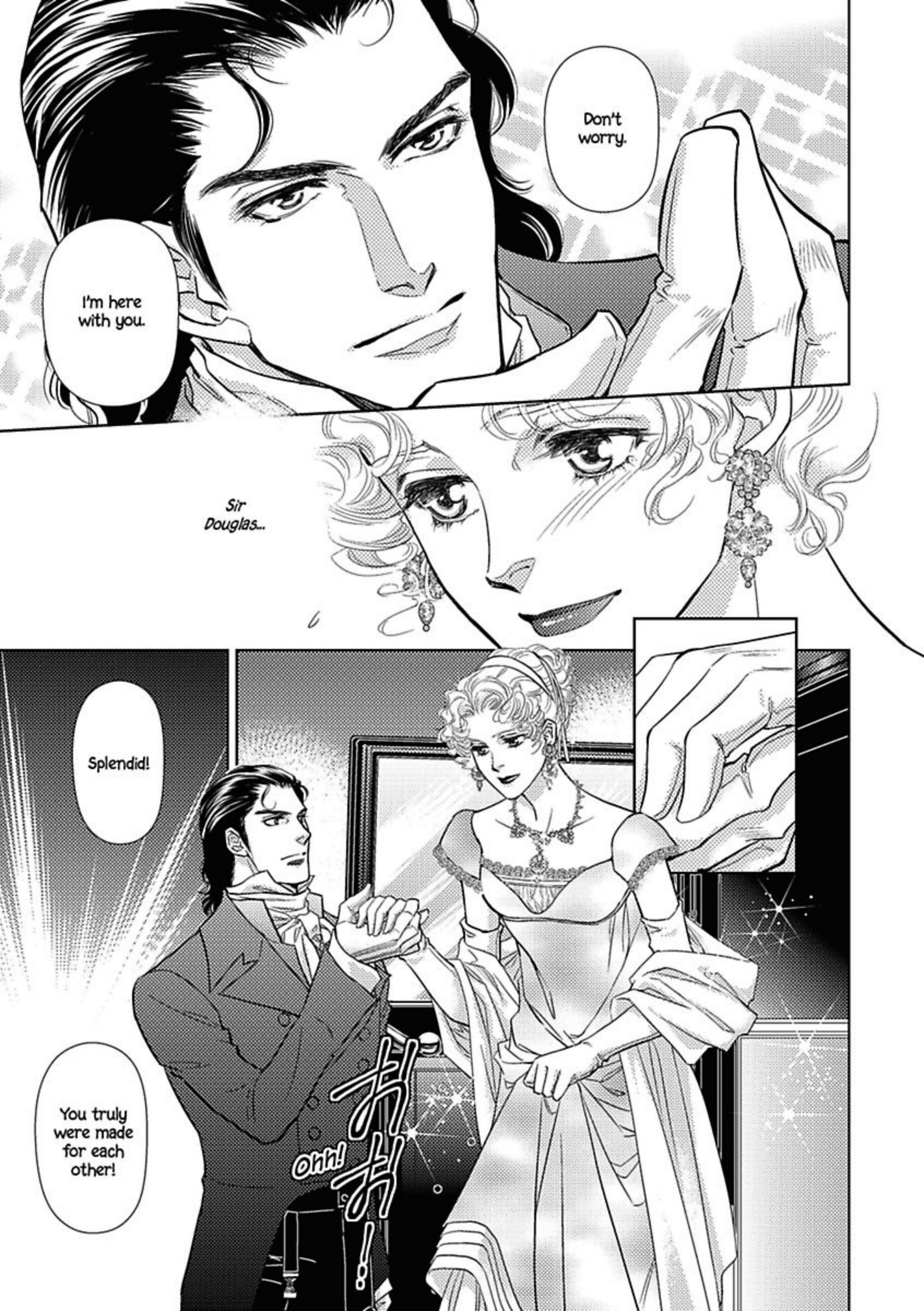

I'm free to do as I please...
...with those clothes you bought me, aren't I?
I'll just sell them and use the money to go back home to France!
I want to find success as a seamstress there.
Is that right?
Well, it's clear you've got the talent for it, even to the untrained eye.
You've got good taste, too.
I'm sure you'll have no trouble achieving your goal.
Thank you very much.
How much does it cost to set up shop in Paris?

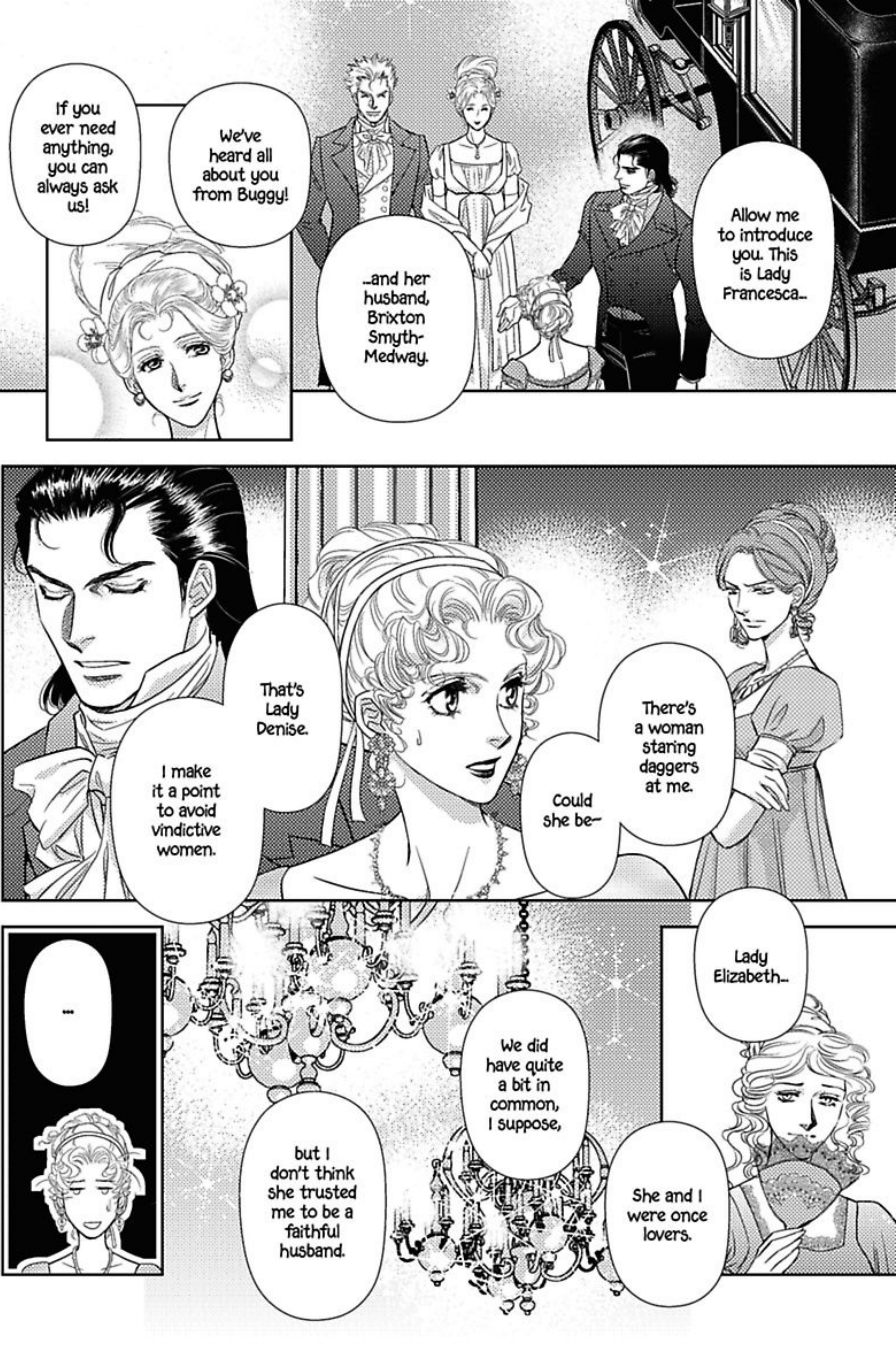

Lending a little money to an aspiring seamstress...
...seems like a sound enough investment to me. What do you think?
It needn't be in Paris, of course.
...
Thank you very much.
I promise I'll pay you back.
You don't sound very happy...
Oh, of course I am!
Why, I can't tell you how—
Oh, forget it!
I can't do it!

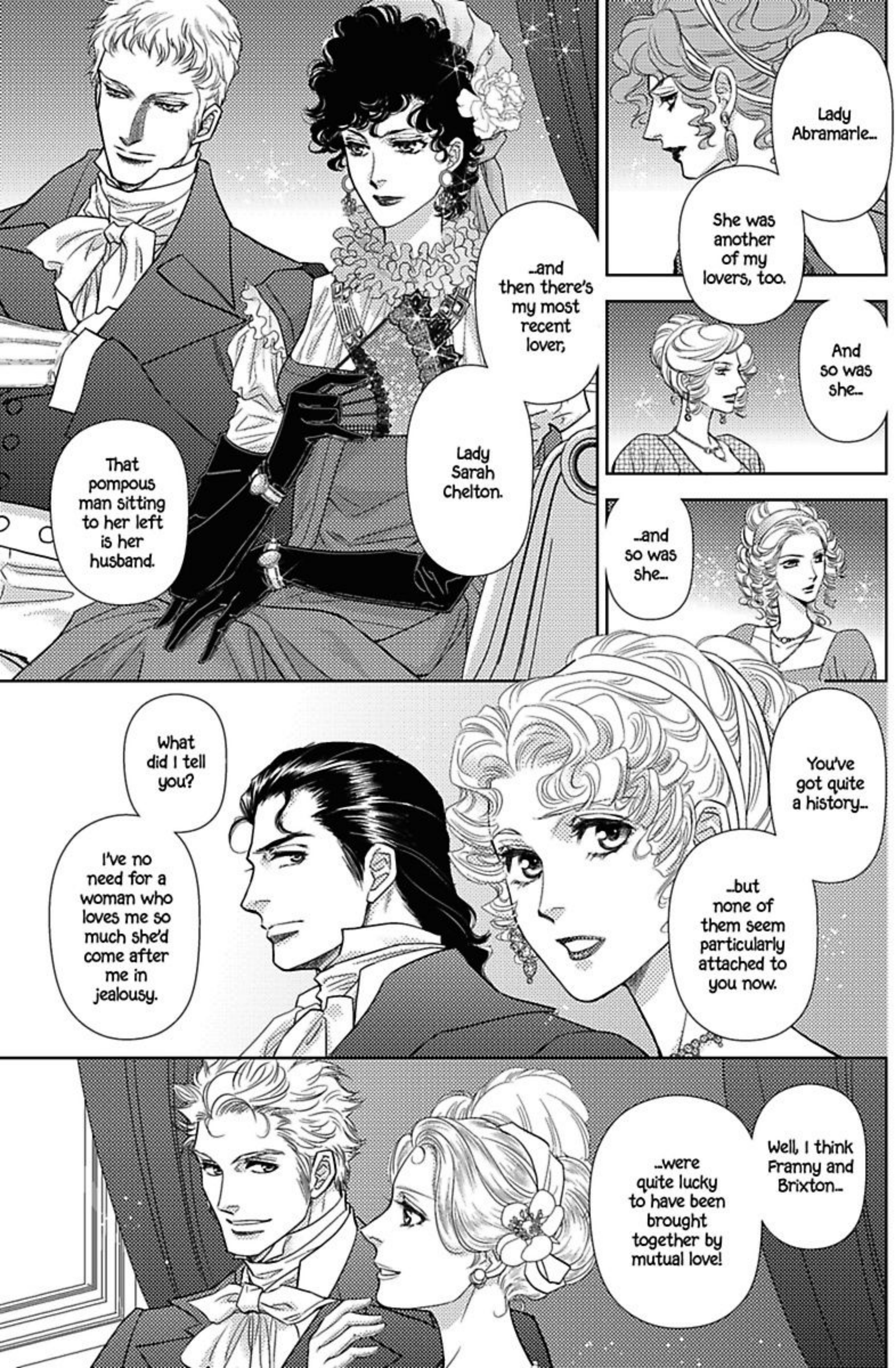

Merci!
Merci!
Merci!
I can't possibly say it enough!
I'm sorry...
I just can't hold back these emotions!
You needn't hold back,
Miss Bergerine.
Now, then...
see you soon.
I can go into business for myself!
I can be free!
Free to live in France, or wherever else I please!

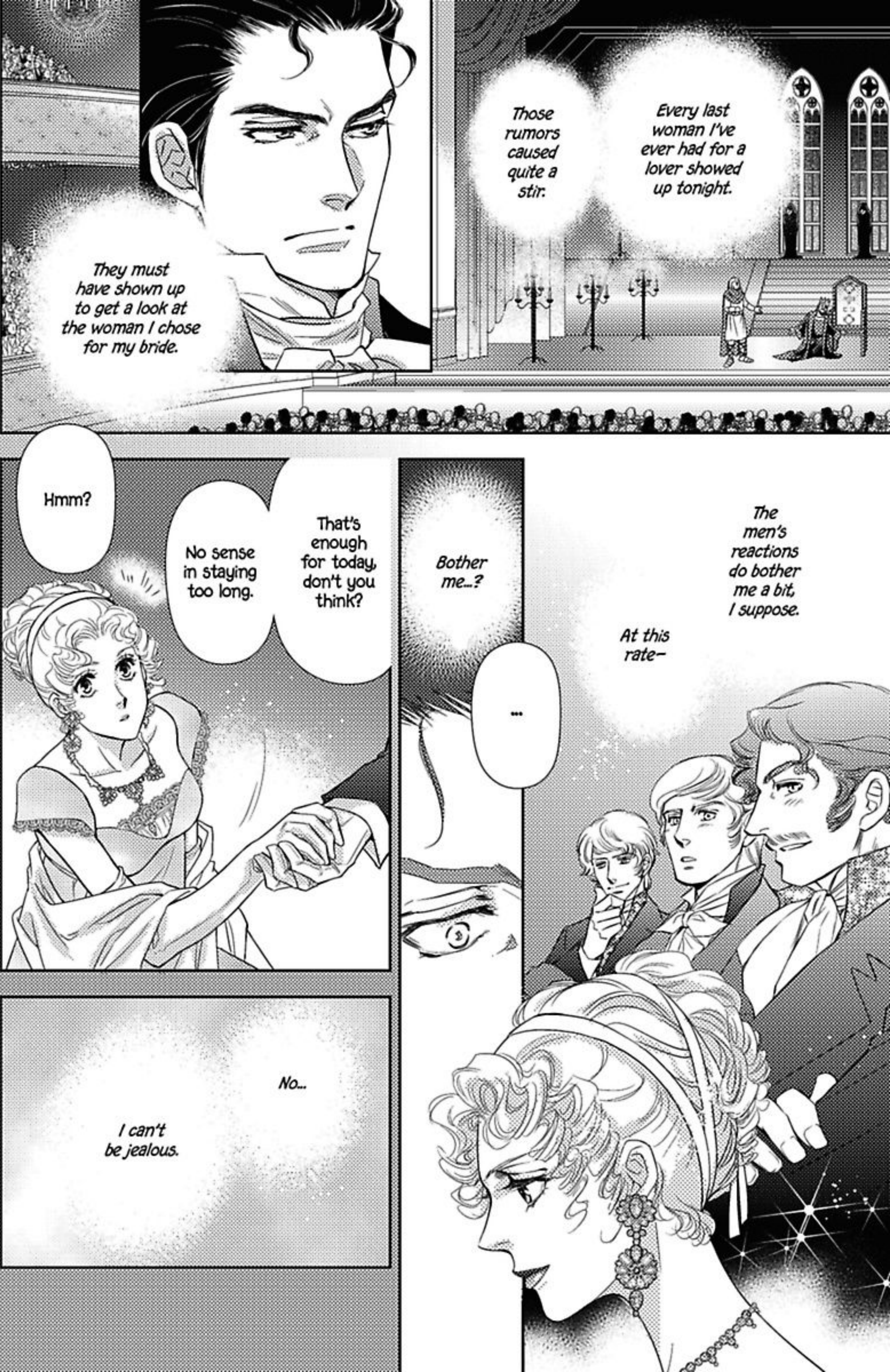

…
So long as it's not London, anyway.
Sir Douglas lives here, after all.
With his dark eyes,
his deep voice,
and his kiss…
I can't let him steal my heart…

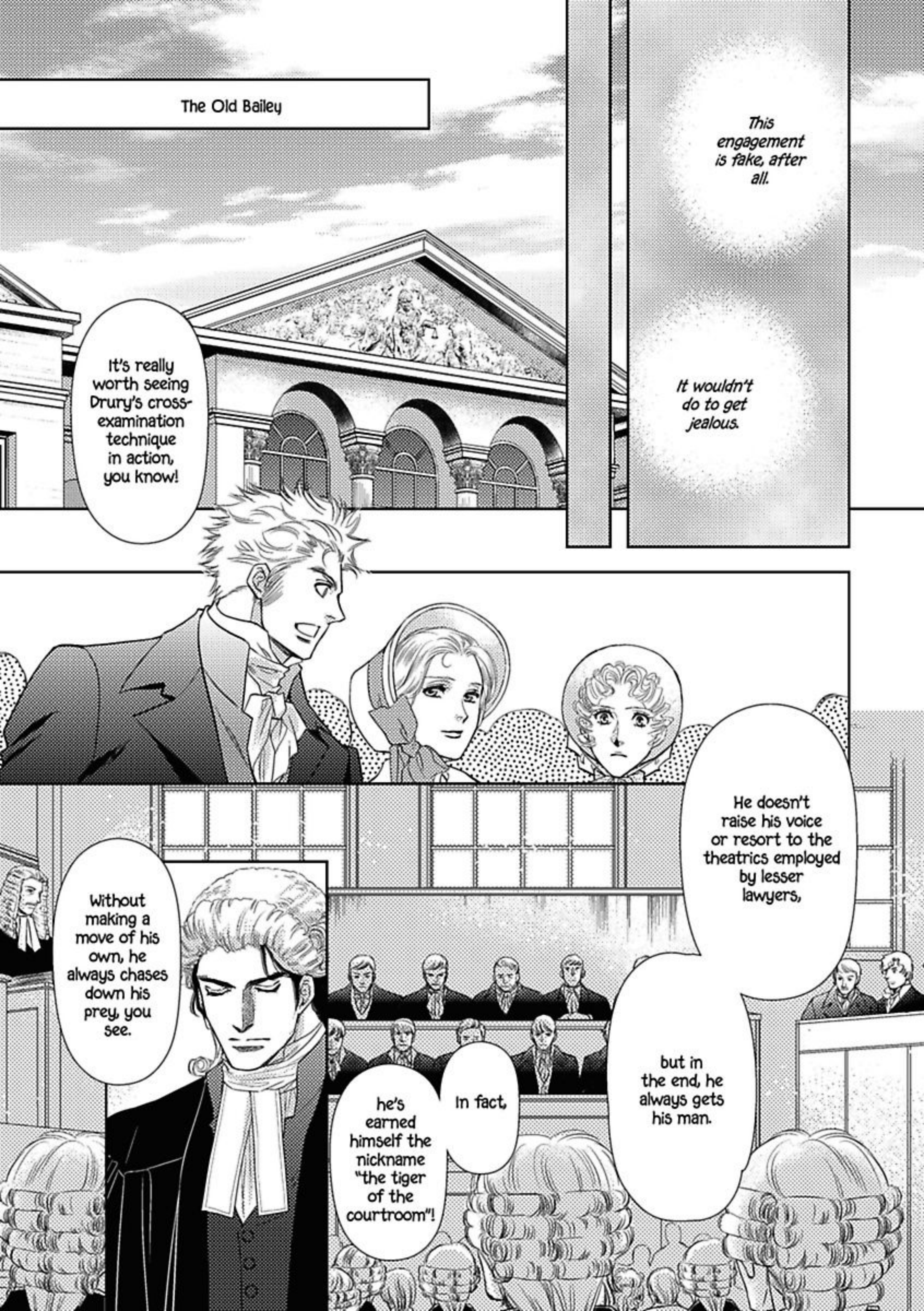

Gasp
ほラ…
You really are famous, aren't you, Sir Douglas?
I've...
...really made a fine mess of things, haven't I?
Even if this is all for show,
for a woman like me to call him my fiancé...
...
If I bring Sir Douglas shame...
Juliette...

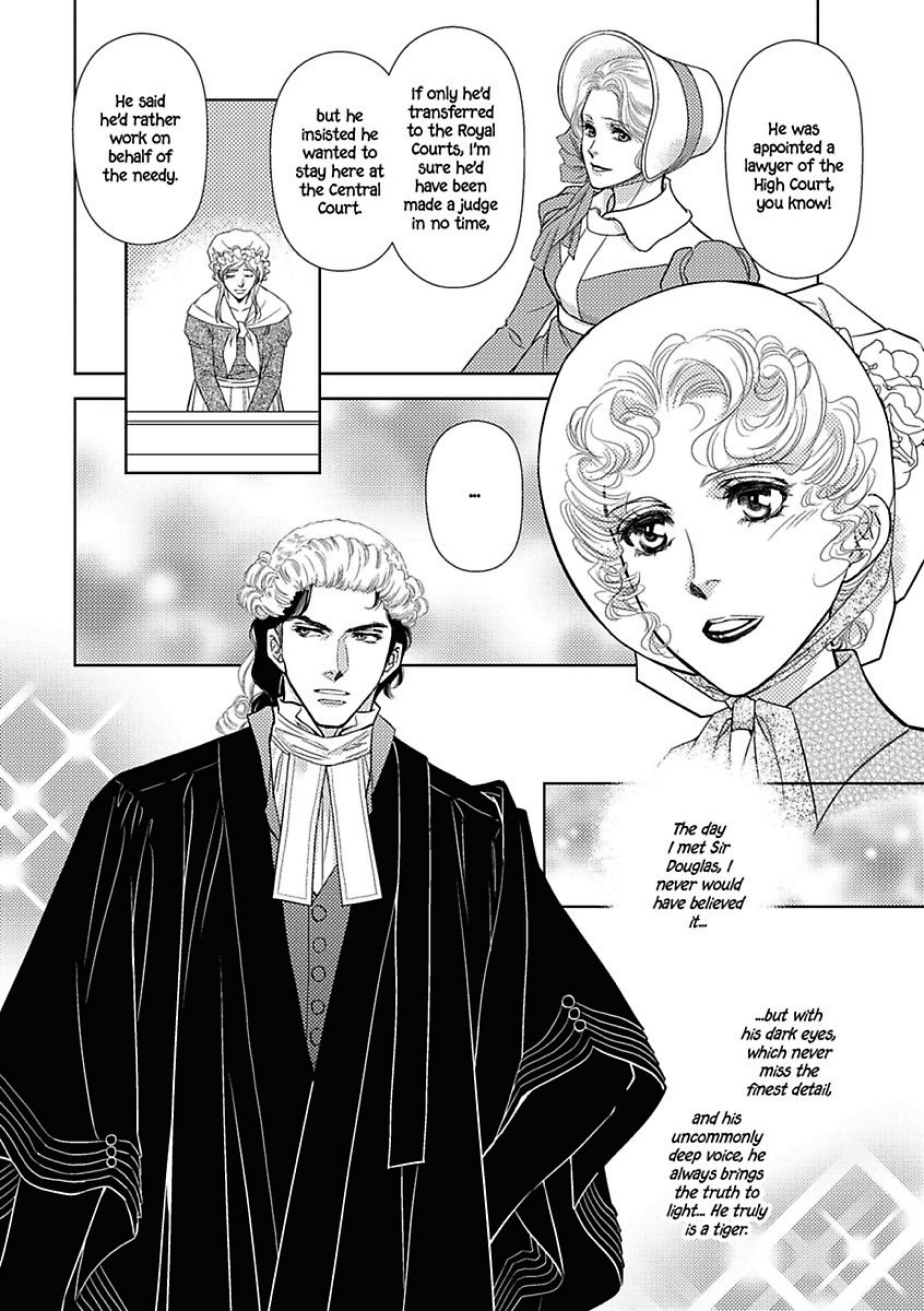

Don't worry.
I'm here with you.
Sir Douglas...
おお!!
Ohh!
Splendid!
You truly were made for each other!

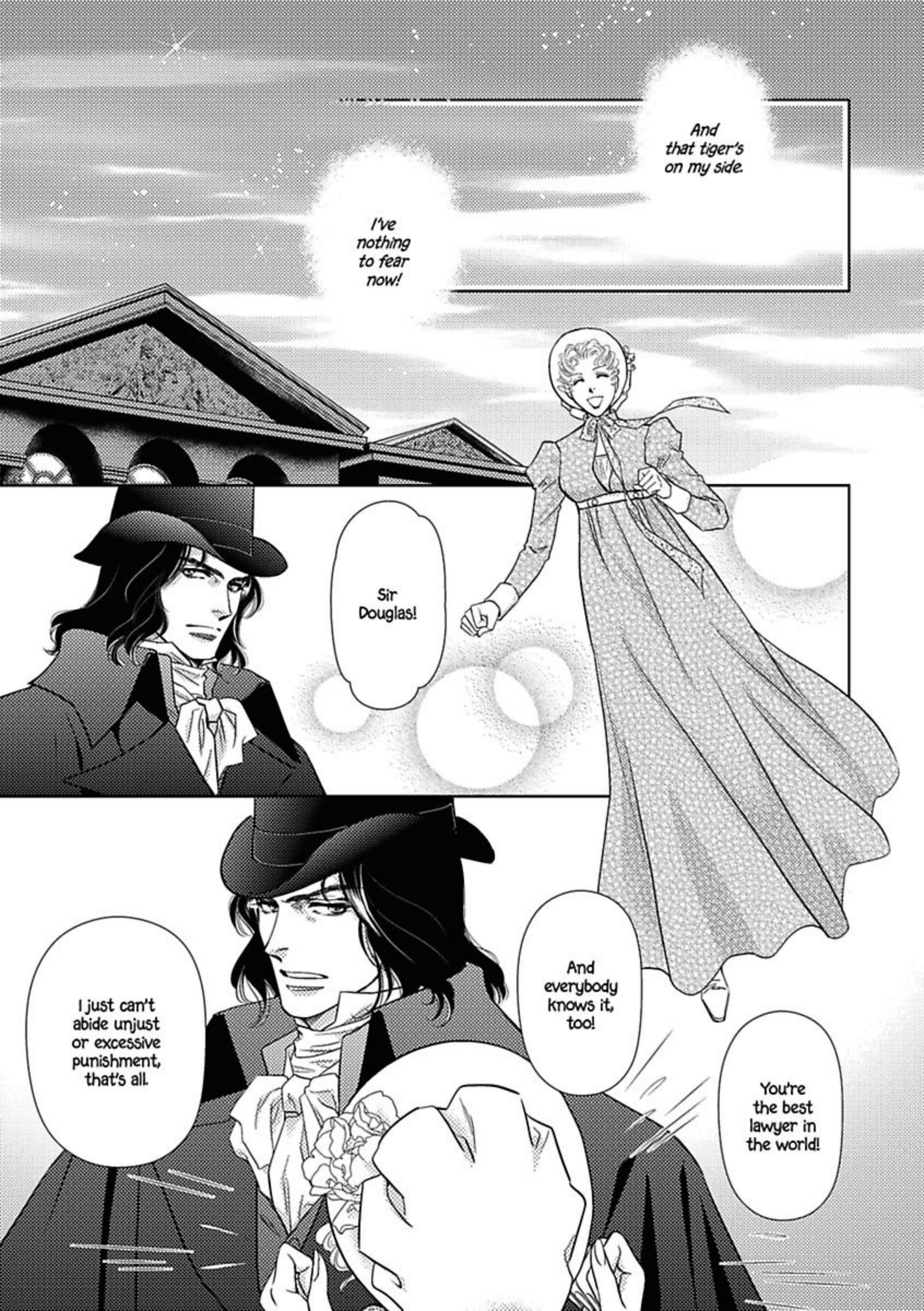

Allow me to introduce you. This is Lady Francesca...
...and her husband, Brixton Smyth-Medway.
We've heard all about you from Buggy!
If you ever need anything, you can always ask us!
There's a woman staring daggers at me.
Could she be—
That's Lady Denise.
I make it a point to avoid vindictive women.
Lady Elizabeth...
She and I were once lovers.
We did have quite a bit in common, I suppose,
but I don't think she trusted me to be a faithful husband.
...

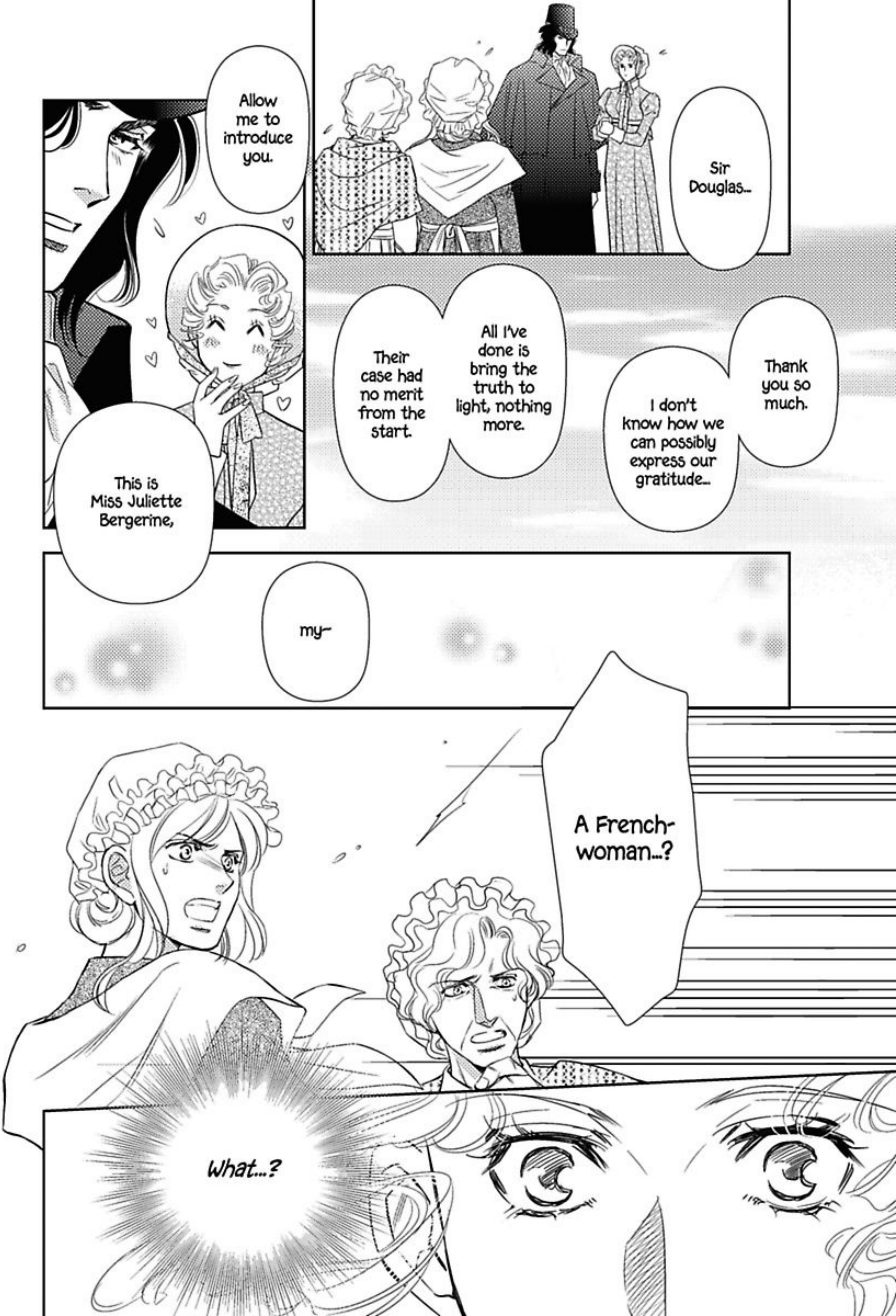

Lady Abramarle...
She was another of my lovers, too.
And so was she...
...and so was she...
...and then there's my most recent lover,
Lady Sarah Chelton.
That pompous man sitting to her left is her husband.
You've got quite a history...
...but none of them seem particularly attached to you now.
What did I tell you?
I've no need for a woman who loves me so much she'd come after me in jealousy.
Well, I think Franny and Brixton...
...were quite lucky to have been brought together by mutual love!

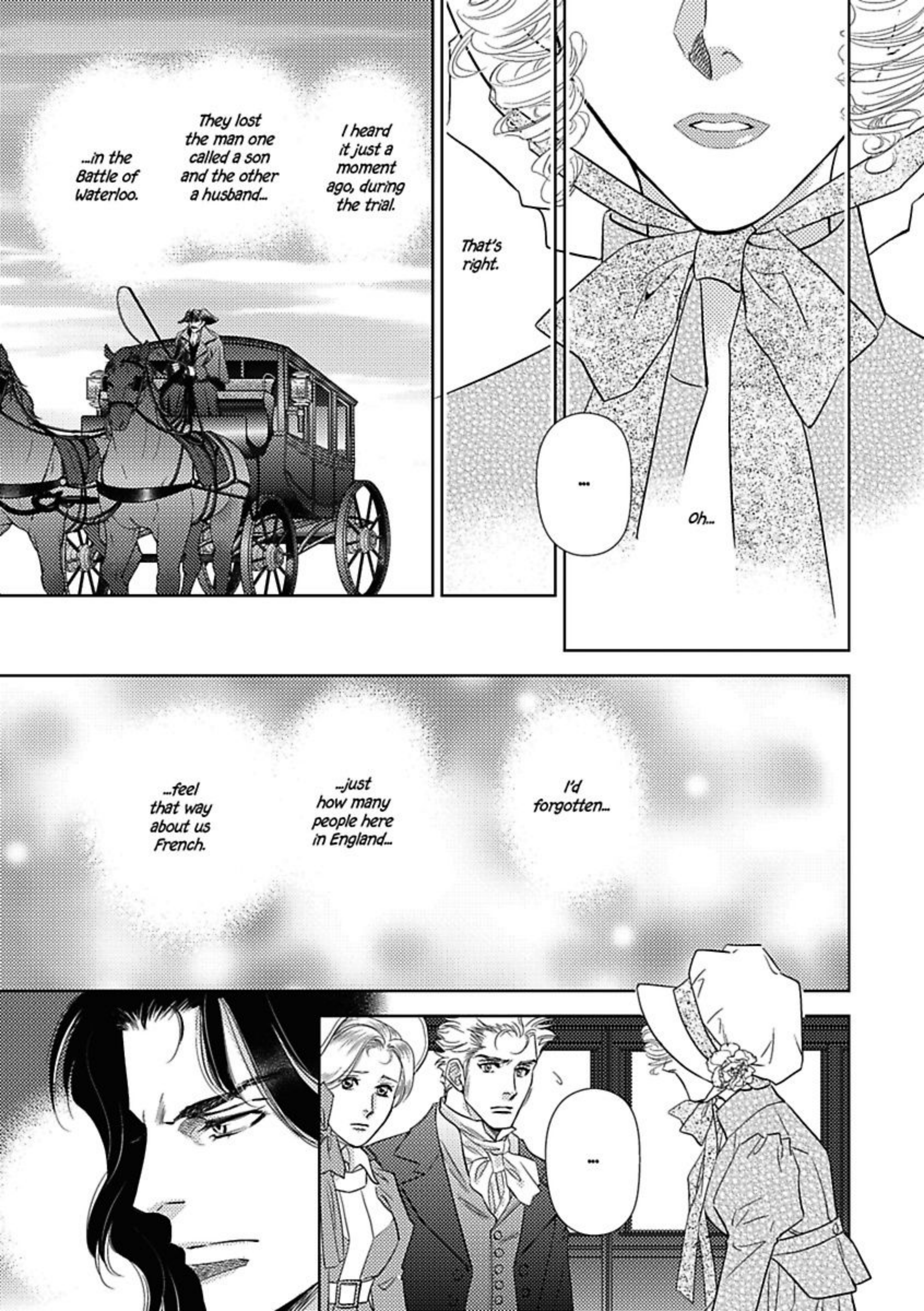

Every last woman I've ever had for a lover showed up tonight.
Those rumors caused quite a stir.
They must have shown up to get a look at the woman I chose for my bride.
The men's reactions do bother me a bit, I suppose.
At this rate—
Bother me...?
...
That's enough for today, don't you think?
No sense in staying too long.
Hmm?
No...
I can't be jealous.

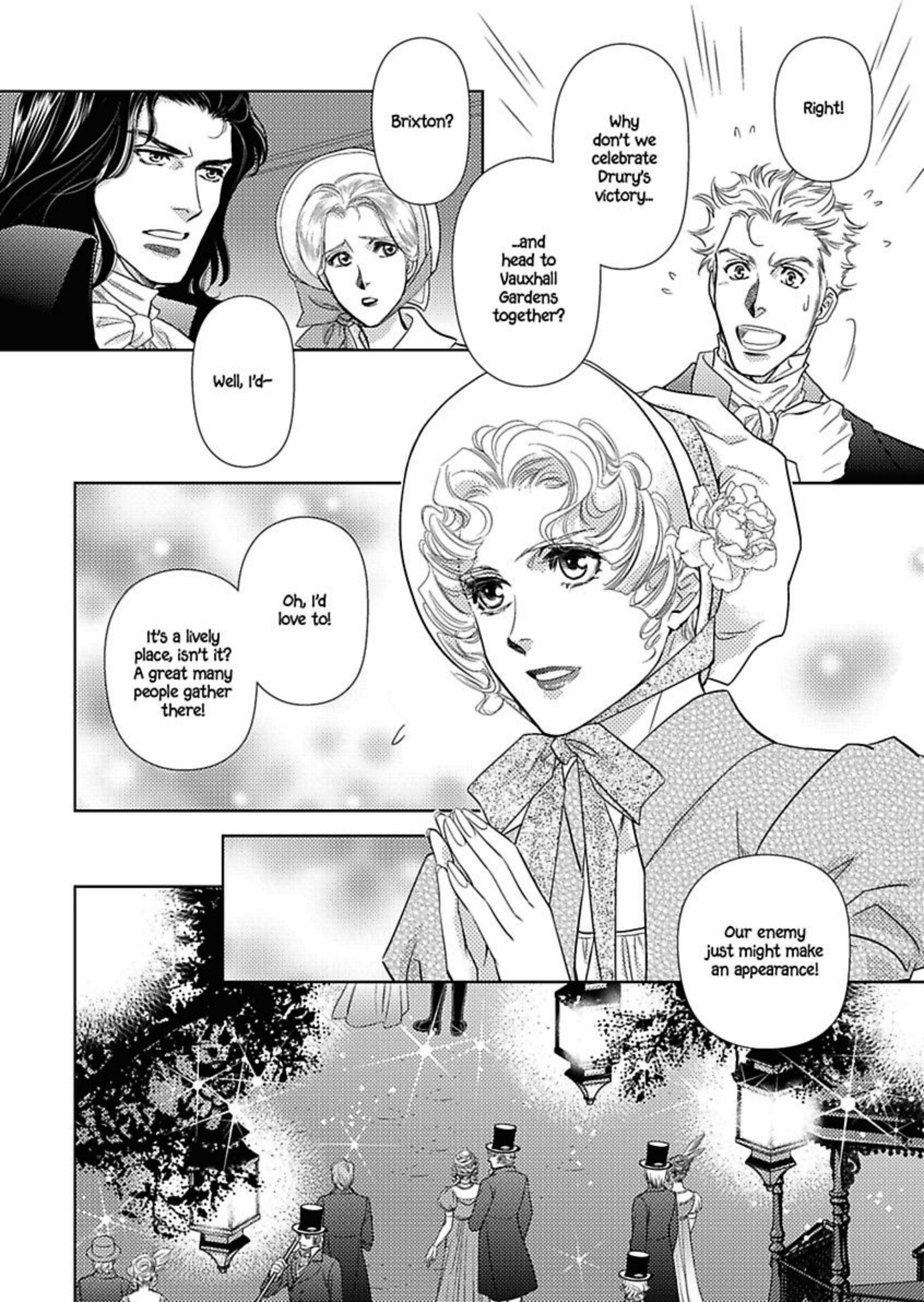

This engagement is fake, after all.
It wouldn't do to get jealous.
The Old Bailey
It's really worth seeing Drury's cross-examination technique in action, you know!
He doesn't raise his voice or resort to the theatrics employed by lesser lawyers,
but in the end, he always gets his man.
In fact,
he's earned himself the nickname "the tiger of the courtroom"!
Without making a move of his own, he always chases down his prey, you see.

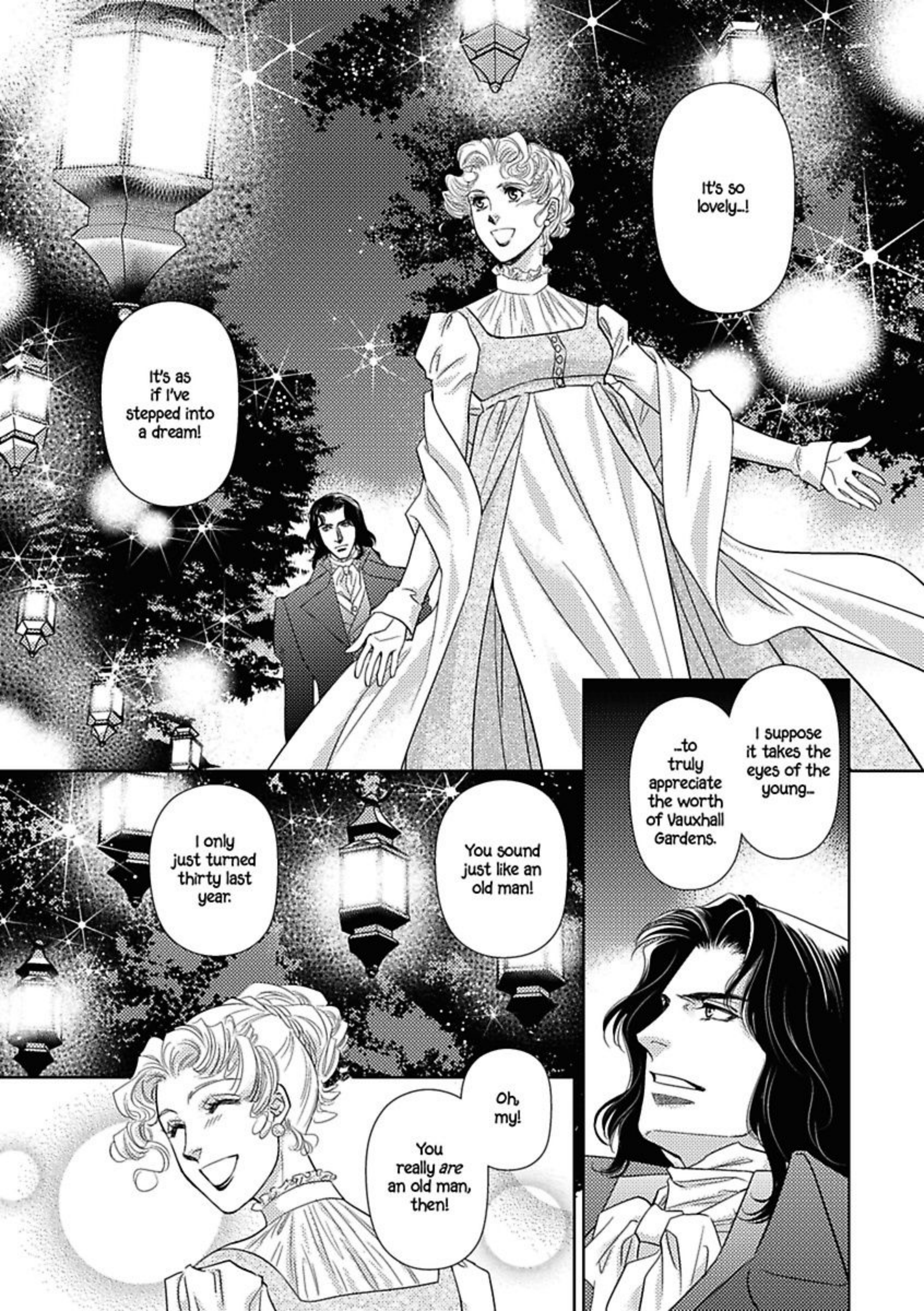

He was appointed a lawyer of the High Court, you know!
If only he'd transferred to the Royal Courts, I'm sure he'd have been made a judge in no time,
but he insisted he wanted to stay here at the Central Court.
He said he'd rather work on behalf of the needy.
...
The day I met Sir Douglas, I never would have believed it...
...but with his dark eyes, which never miss the finest detail,
and his uncommonly deep voice, he always brings the truth to light... He truly is a tiger.

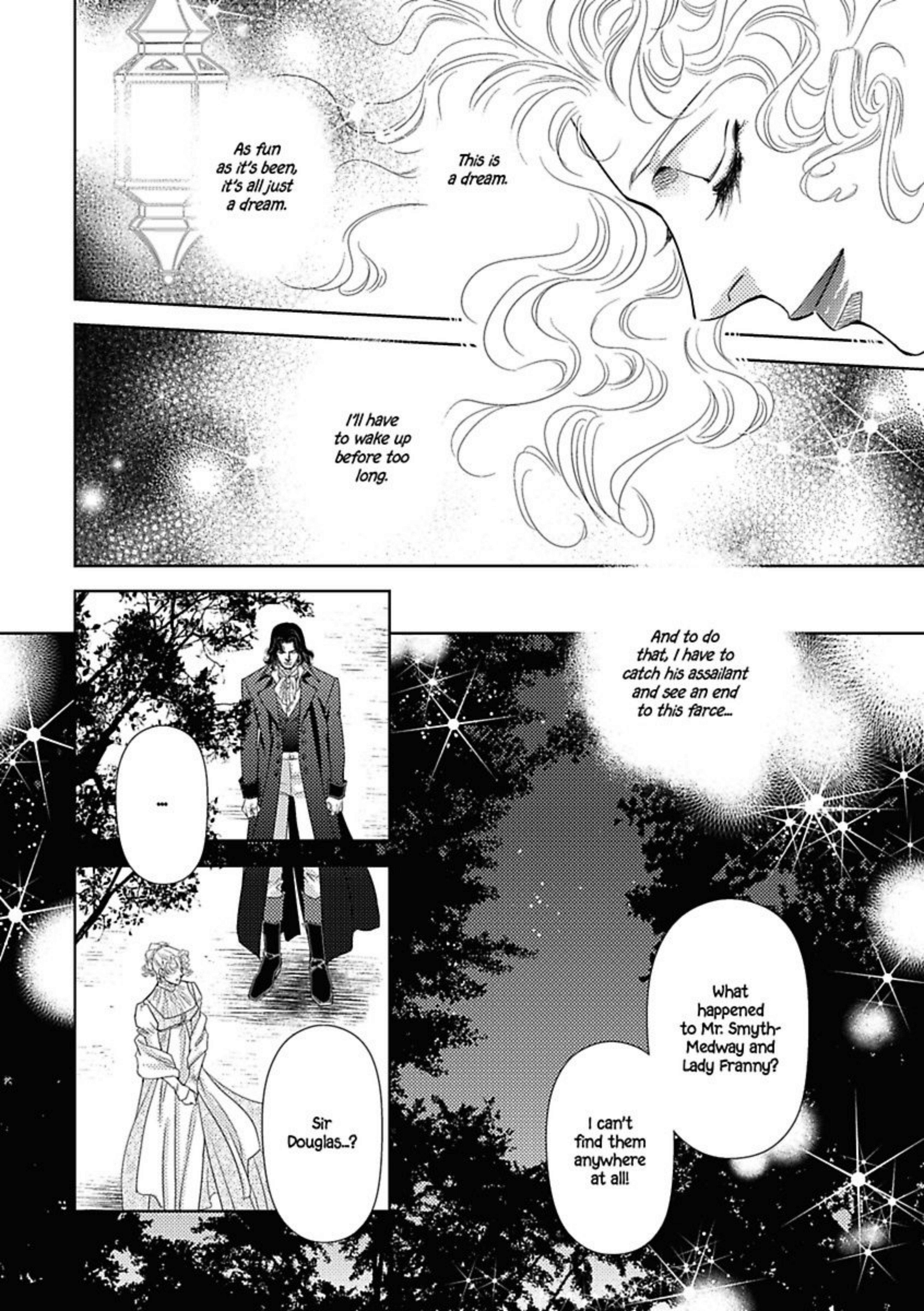

And that tiger's on my side.
I've nothing to fear now!
Sir Douglas!
You're the best lawyer in the world!
And everybody knows it, too!
I just can't abide unjust or excessive punishment, that's all.

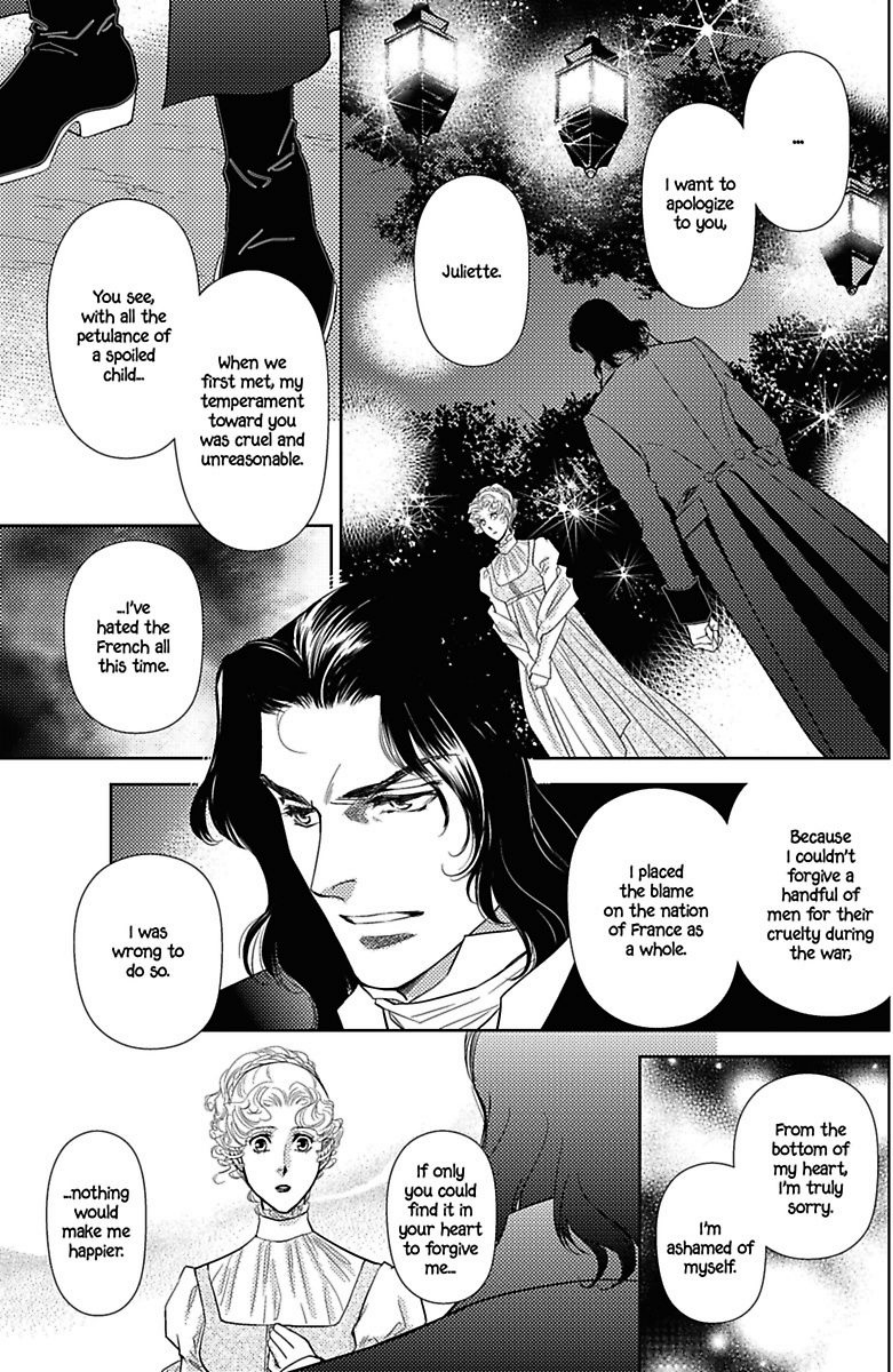

Sir Douglas...
Thank you so much.
I don't know how we can possibly express our gratitude...
All I've done is bring the truth to light, nothing more.
Their case had no merit from the start.
Allow me to introduce you.
This is Miss Juliette Bergerine,
my-
A French-woman...?
What...?

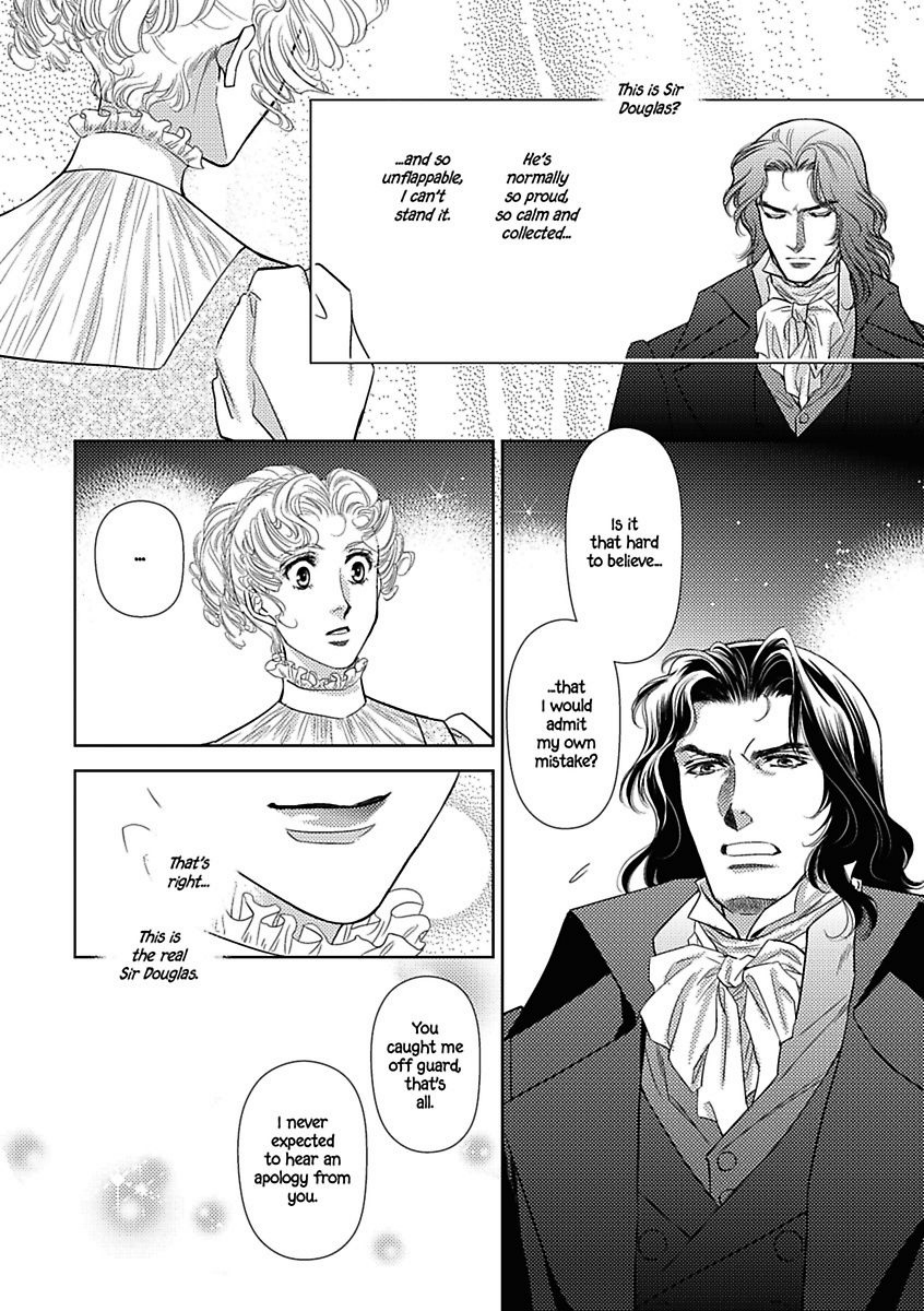

Oh...
...
That's right.
I heard it just a moment ago, during the trial.
They lost the man one called a son and the other a husband...
...in the Battle of Waterloo.
I'd forgotten...
...just how many people here in England...
...feel that way about us French.
...

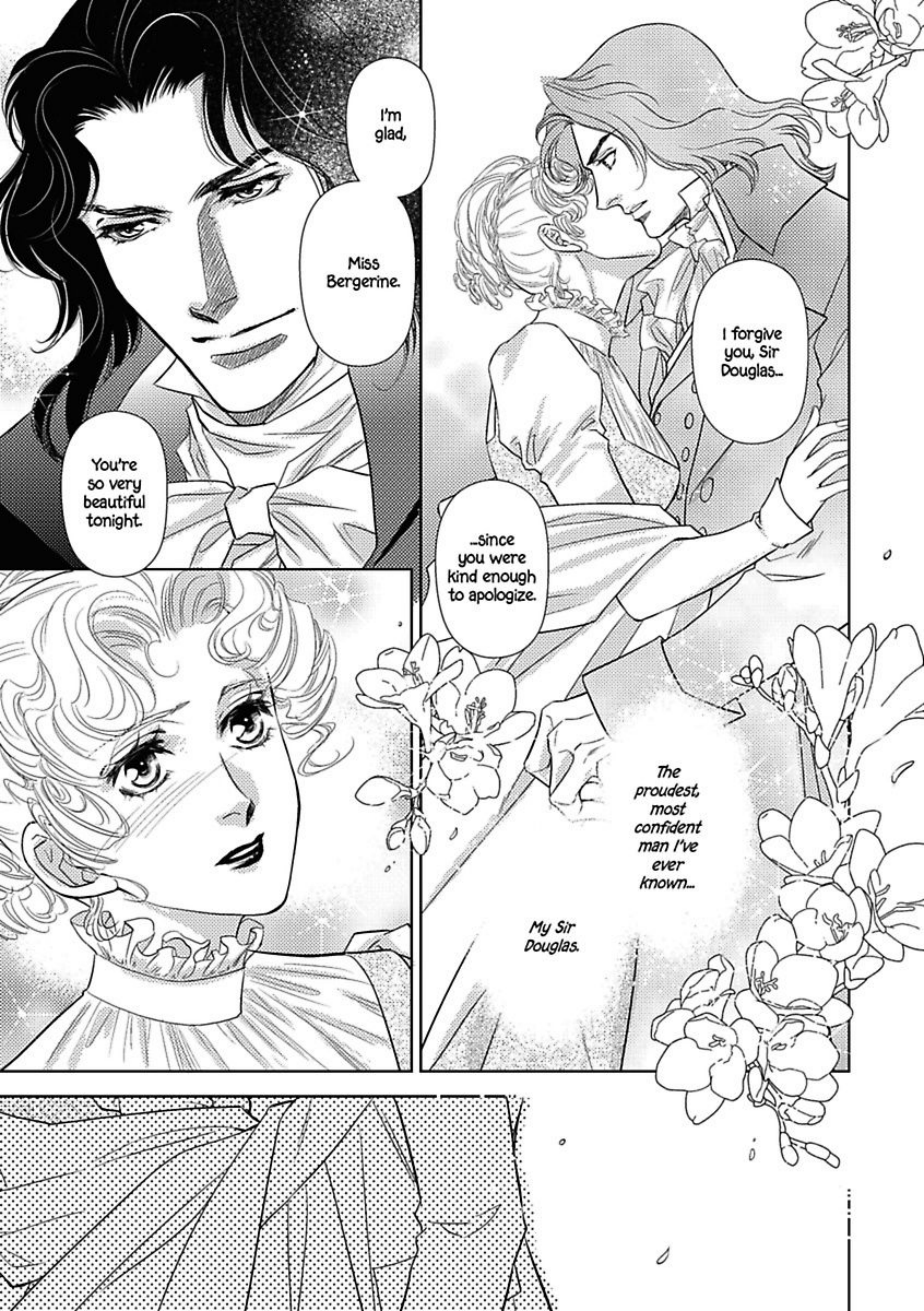

Right!
Why don't we celebrate Drury's victory...
...and head to Vauxhall Gardens together?
Brixton?
Well, I'd–
Oh, I'd love to!
It's a lively place, isn't it? A great many people gather there!
Our enemy just might make an appearance!

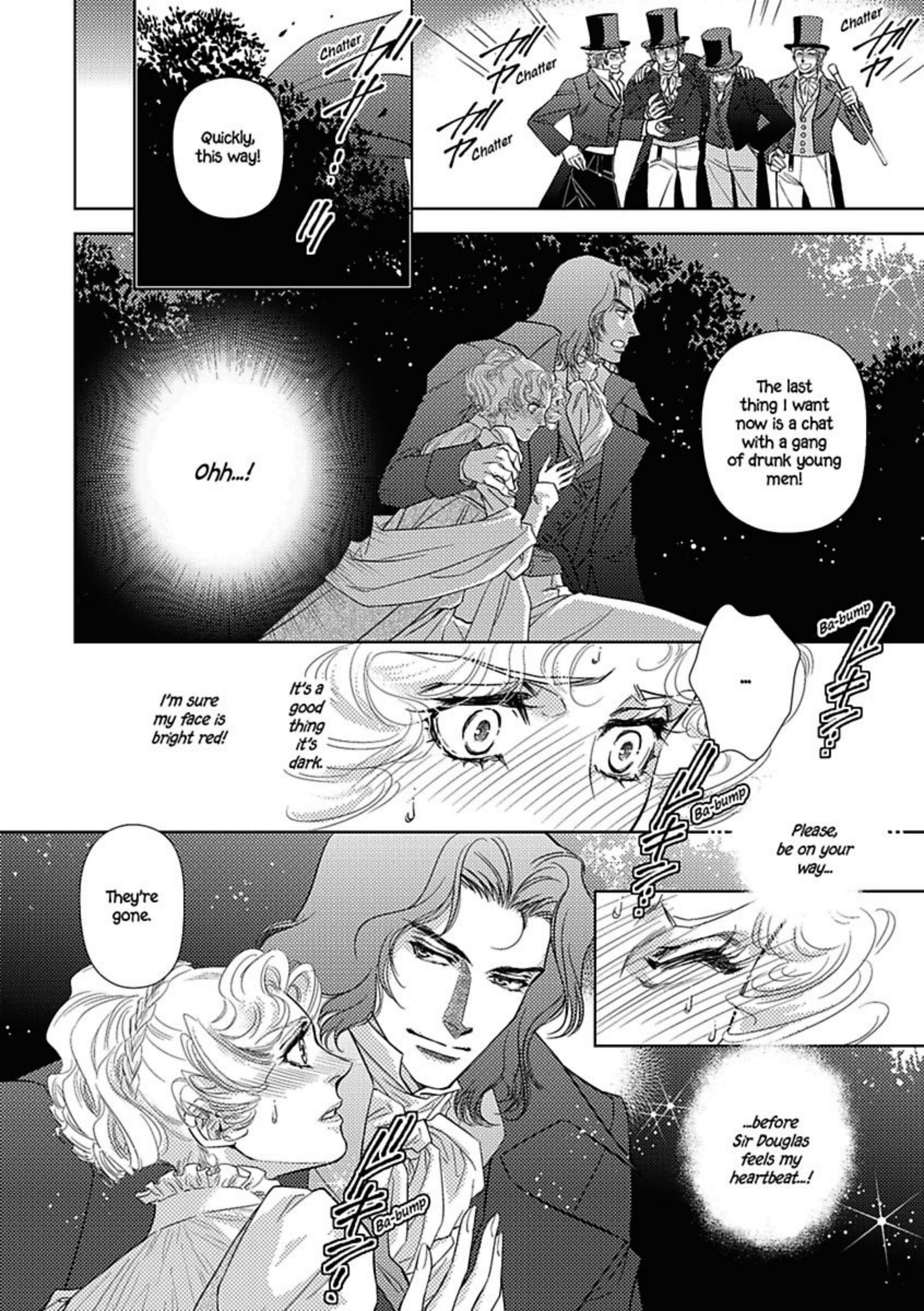

It's so lovely...!
It's as if I've stepped into a dream!
I suppose it takes the eyes of the young...
...to truly appreciate the worth of Vauxhall Gardens.
You sound just like an old man!
I only just turned thirty last year.
Oh, my!
You really *are* an old man, then!

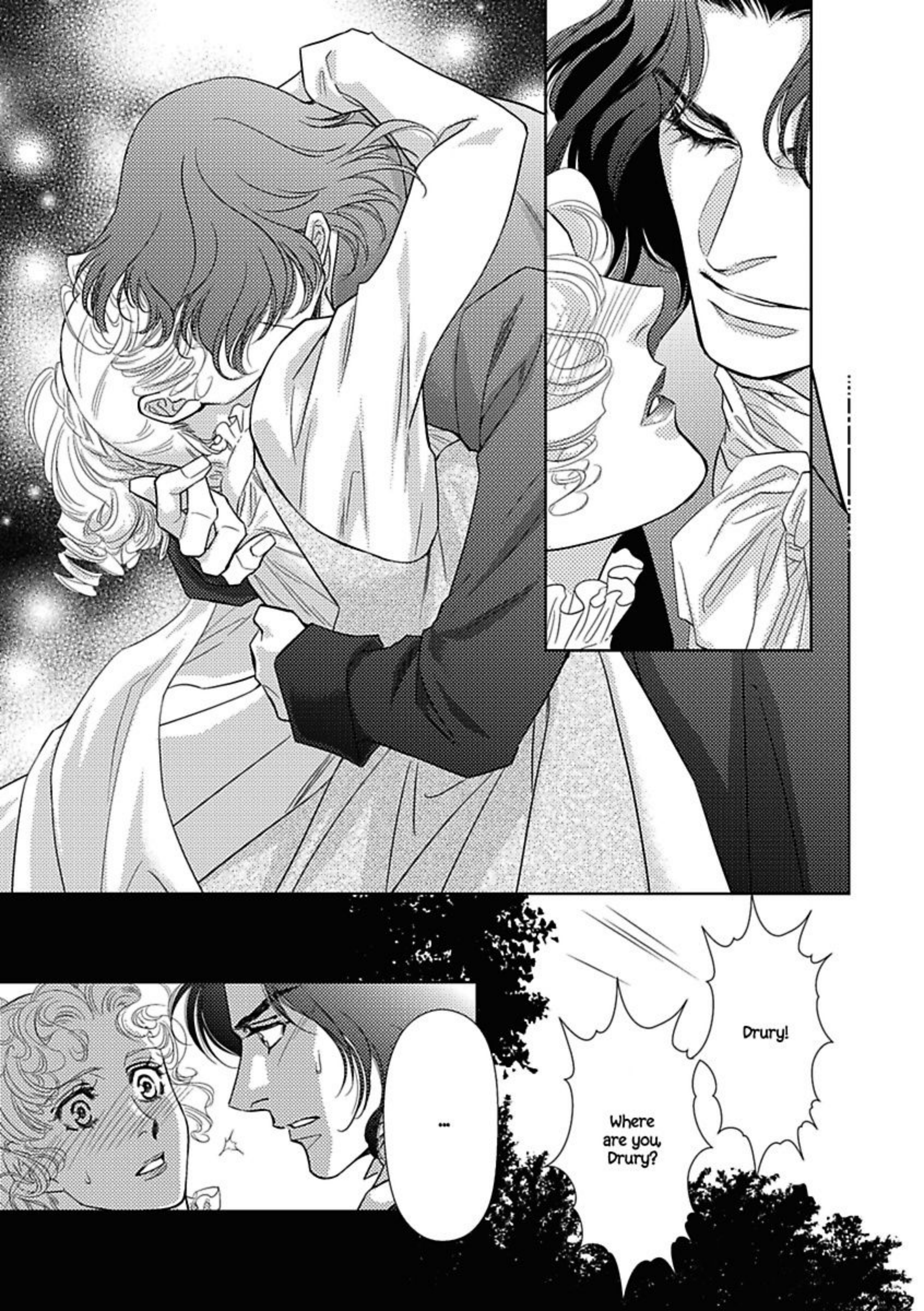

This is a dream.
As fun as it's been, it's all just a dream.
I'll have to wake up before too long.
And to do that, I have to catch his assailant and see an end to this farce...
What happened to Mr. Smyth-Medway and Lady Franny?
I can't find them anywhere at all!
...
Sir Douglas...?

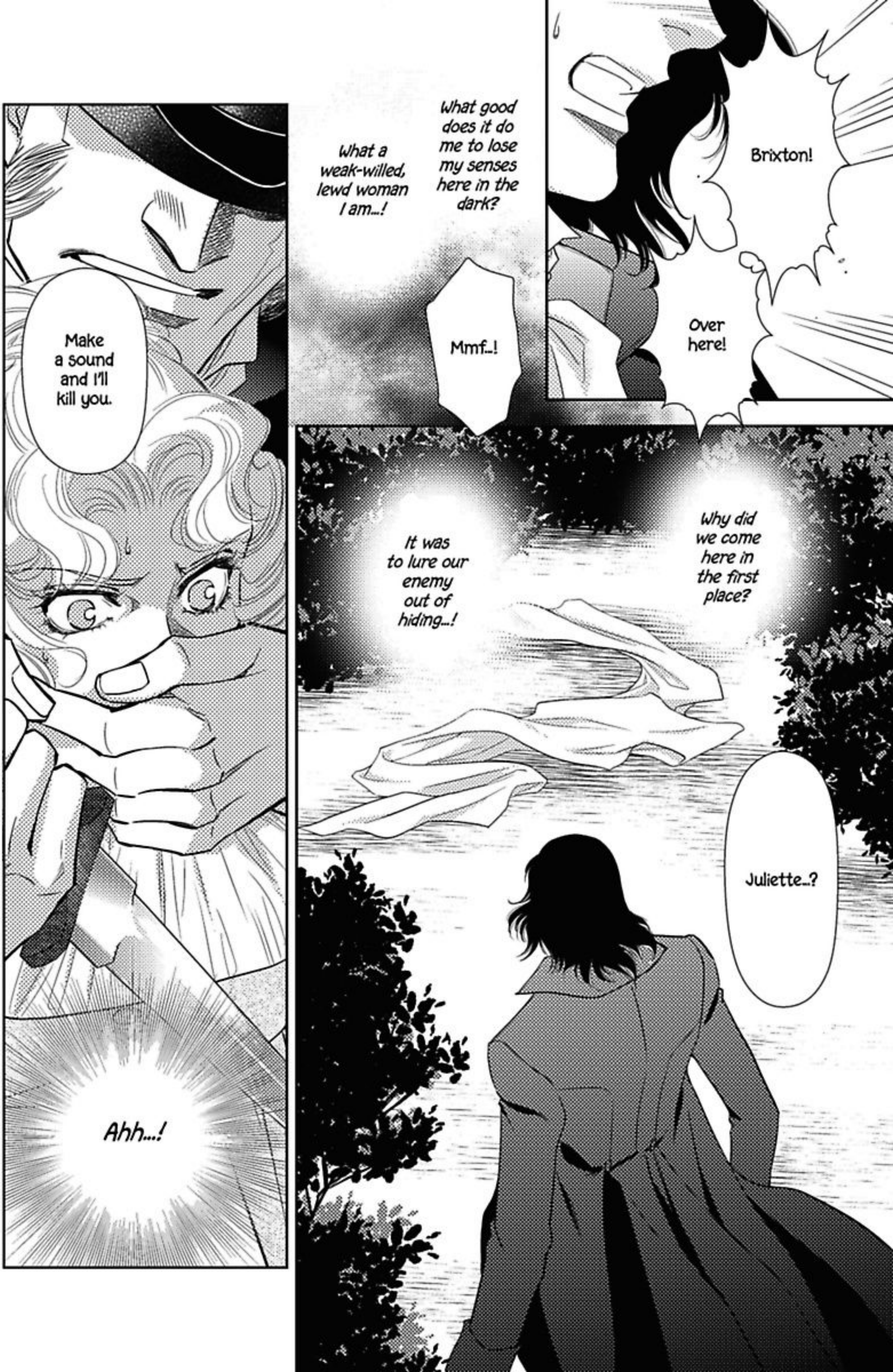

...
I want to apologize to you,
Juliette.
When we first met, my temperament toward you was cruel and unreasonable.
You see, with all the petulance of a spoiled child...
...I've hated the French all this time.
Because I couldn't forgive a handful of men for their cruelty during the war,
I placed the blame on the nation of France as a whole.
I was wrong to do so.
From the bottom of my heart, I'm truly sorry.
I'm ashamed of myself.
If only you could find it in your heart to forgive me...
...nothing would make me happier.

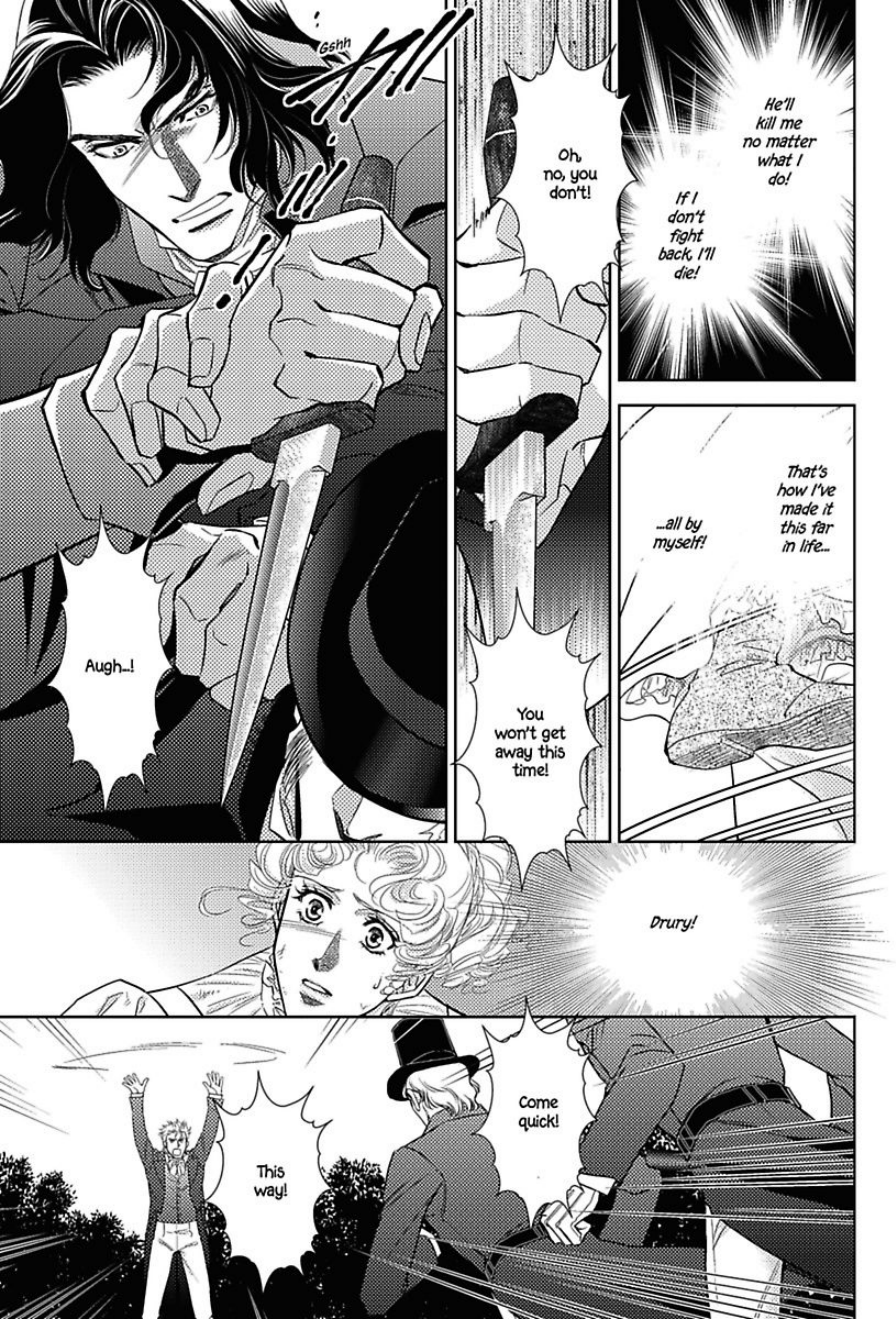

This is Sir Douglas?
He's normally so proud, so calm and collected...
...and so unflappable, I can't stand it.
Is it that hard to believe...
...that I would admit my own mistake?
...
That's right...
This is the real Sir Douglas.
You caught me off guard, that's all.
I never expected to hear an apology from you.

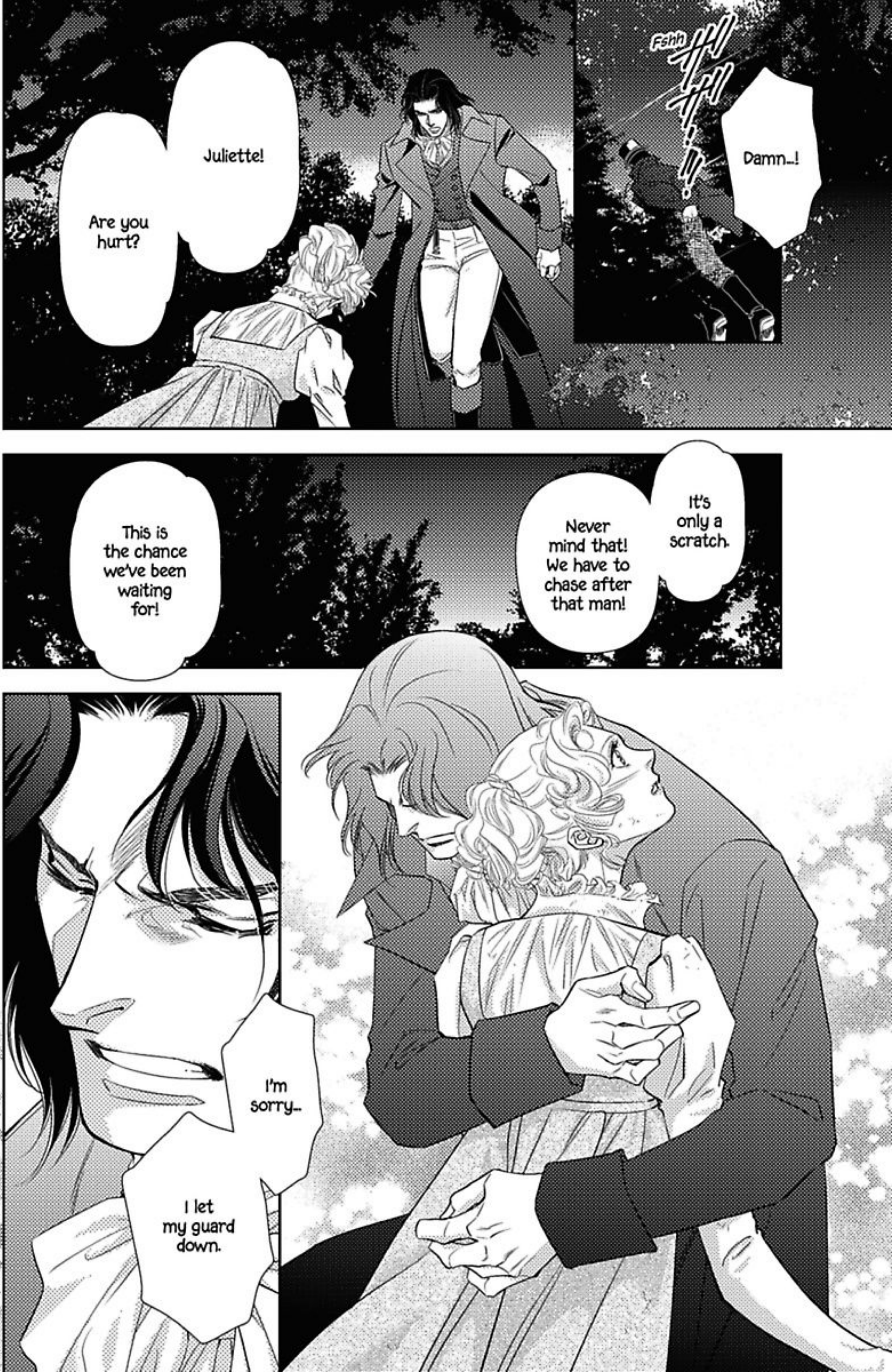

I forgive you, Sir Douglas...
...since you were kind enough to apologize.
The proudest, most confident man I've ever known...
My Sir Douglas.
I'm glad,
Miss Bergerine.
You're so very beautiful tonight.

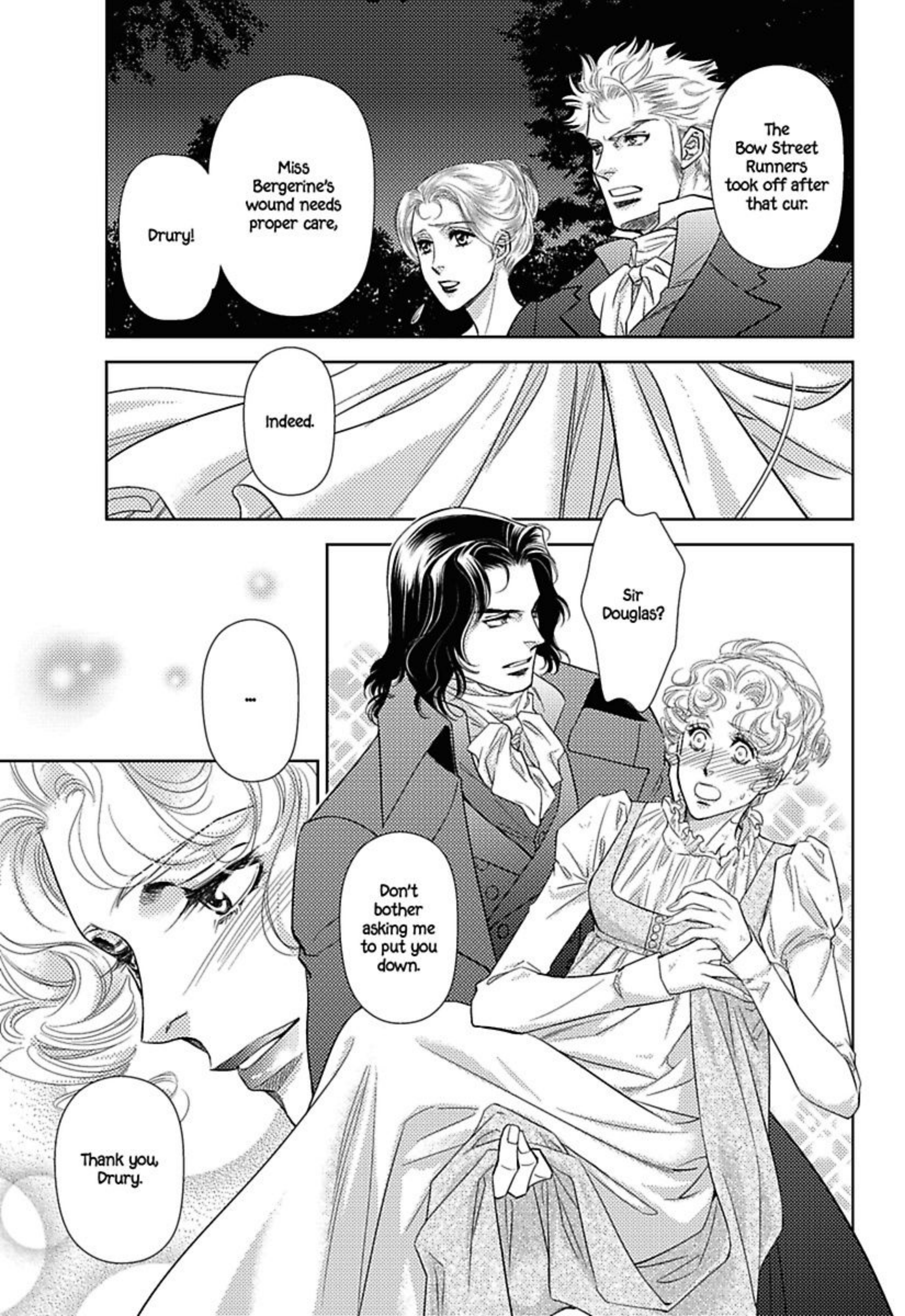

Chatter
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter
Quickly, this way!
The last thing I want now is a chat with a gang of drunk young men!
Ohh...!
Ba-bump
...
Ba-bump
It's a good thing it's dark.
I'm sure my face is bright red!
Please, be on your way...
...before Sir Douglas feels my heartbeat...!
Ba-bump
They're gone.

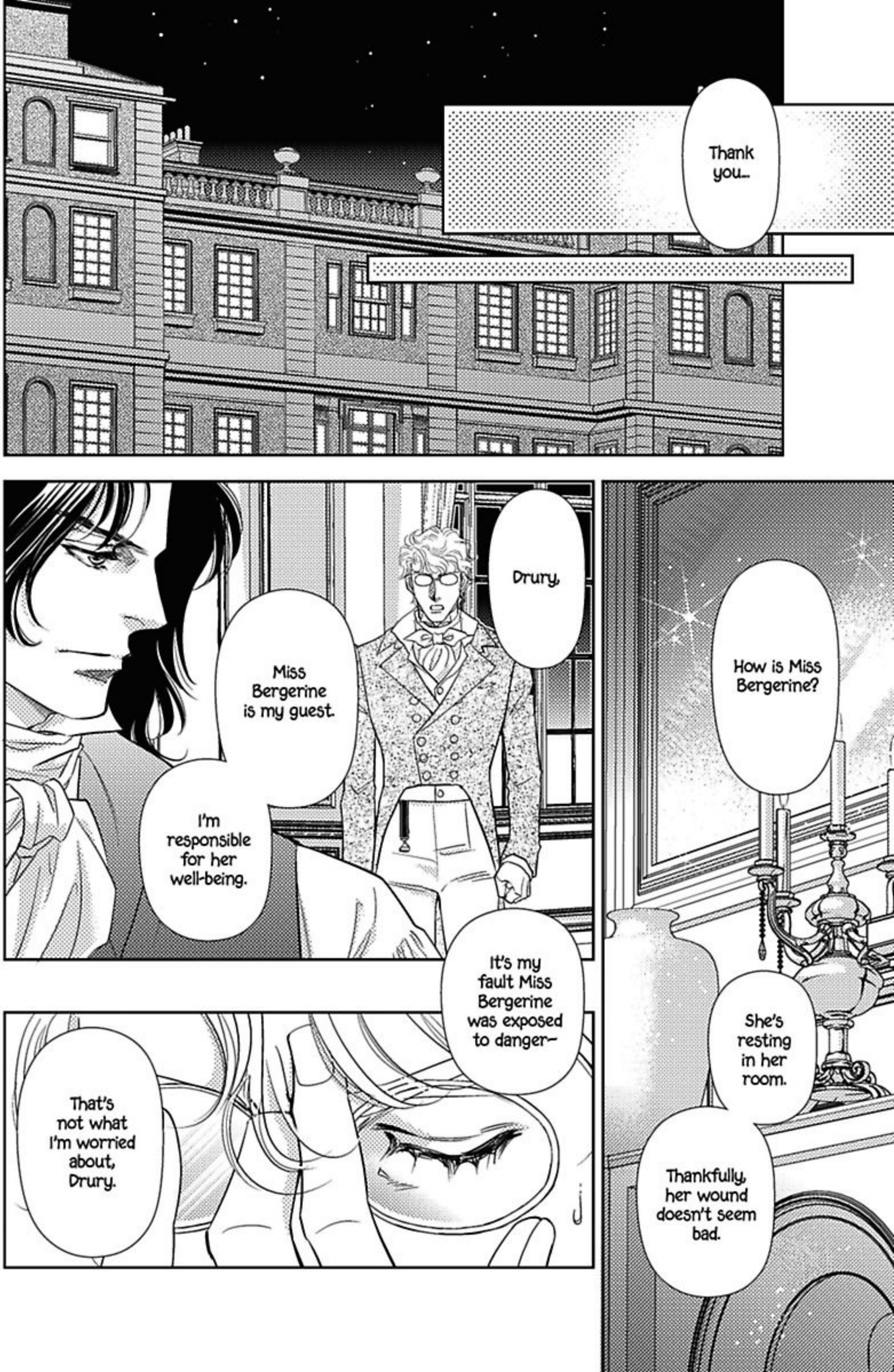

Drury!
Where are you, Drury?
...

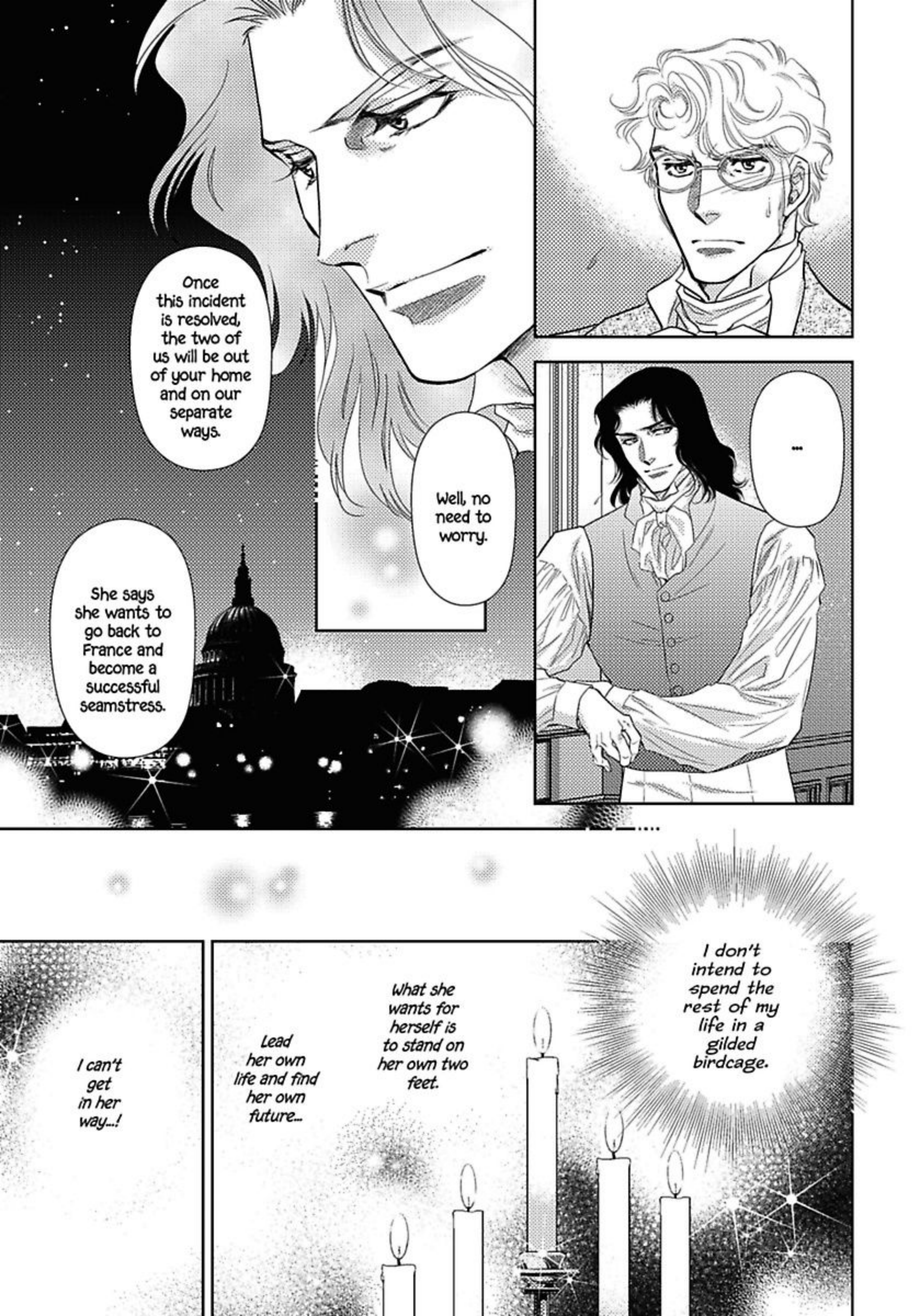

Brixton!
Over here!
Why did we come here in the first place?
It was to lure our enemy out of hiding...!
Juliette...?
What good does it do me to lose my senses here in the dark?
What a weak-willed, lewd woman I am...!
Mmf...!
Make a sound and I'll kill you.
Ahh...!

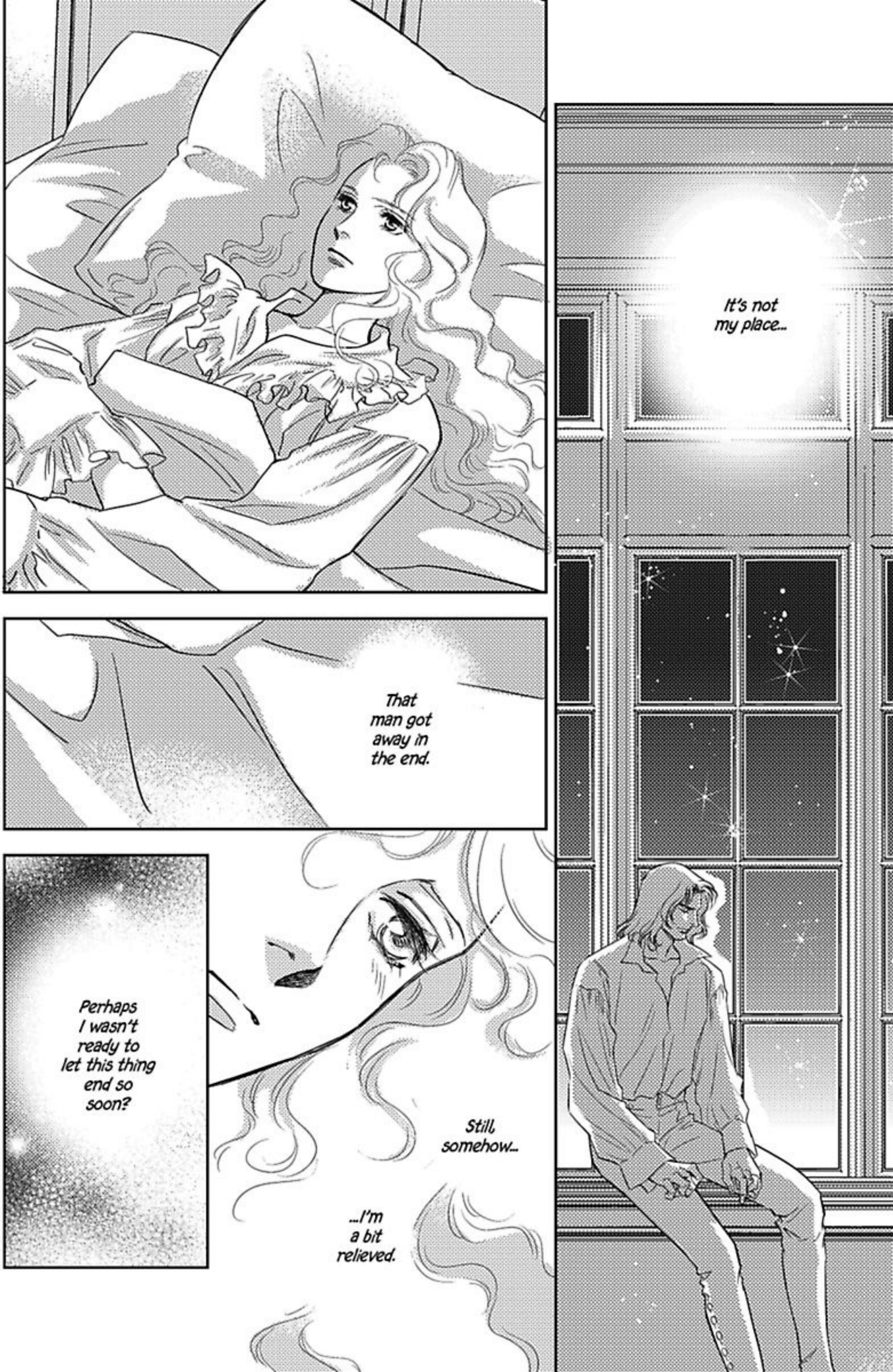

He'll kill me no matter what I do!
If I don't fight back, I'll die!
That's how I've made it this far in life...
...all by myself!
Oh, no, you don't!
You won't get away this time!
Gshh
Augh...!
Drury!
Come quick!
This way!

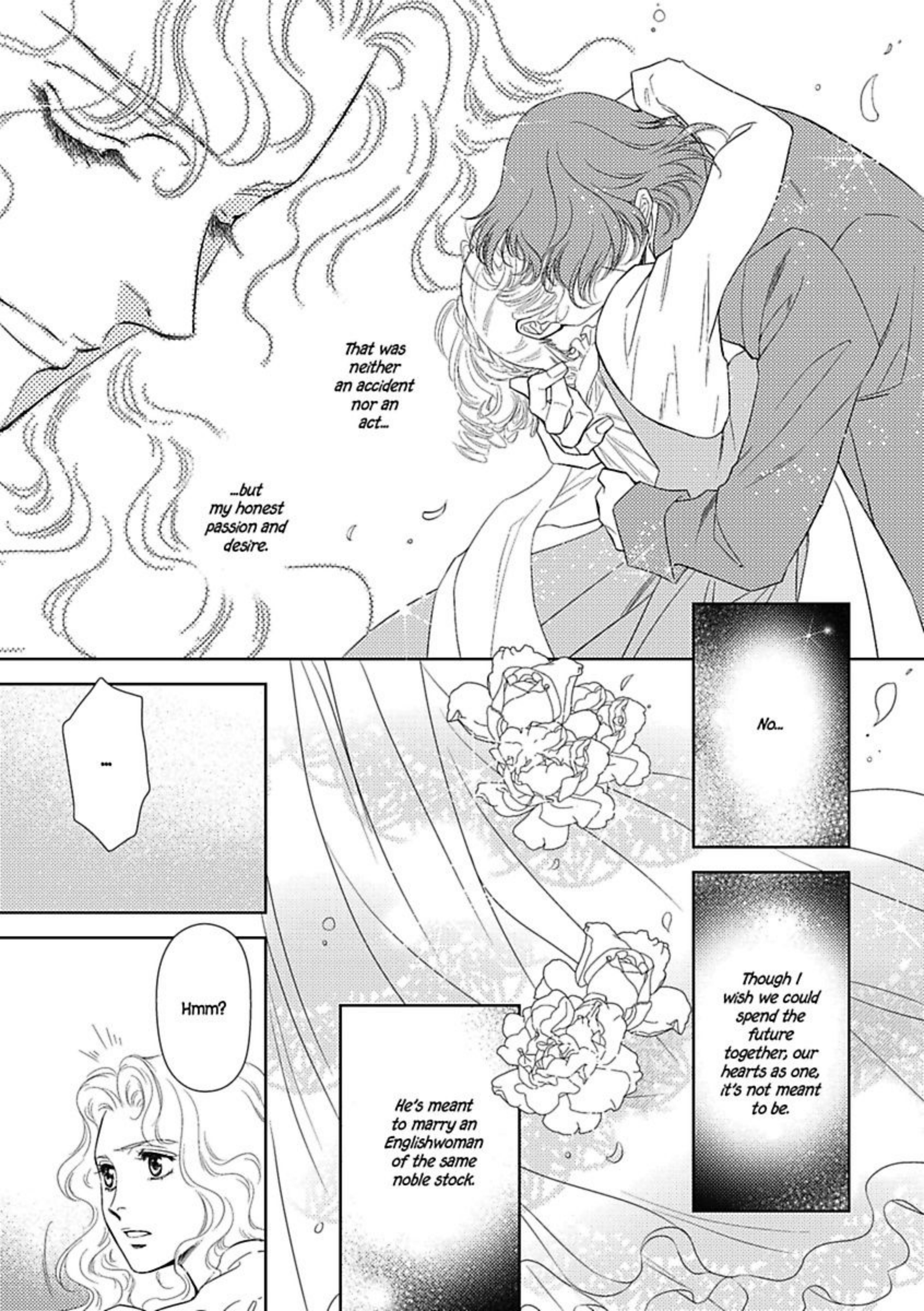

Fshh
Damn...!
Juliette!
Are you hurt?
It's only a scratch.
Never mind that! We have to chase after that man!
This is the chance we've been waiting for!
I'm sorry...
I let my guard down.

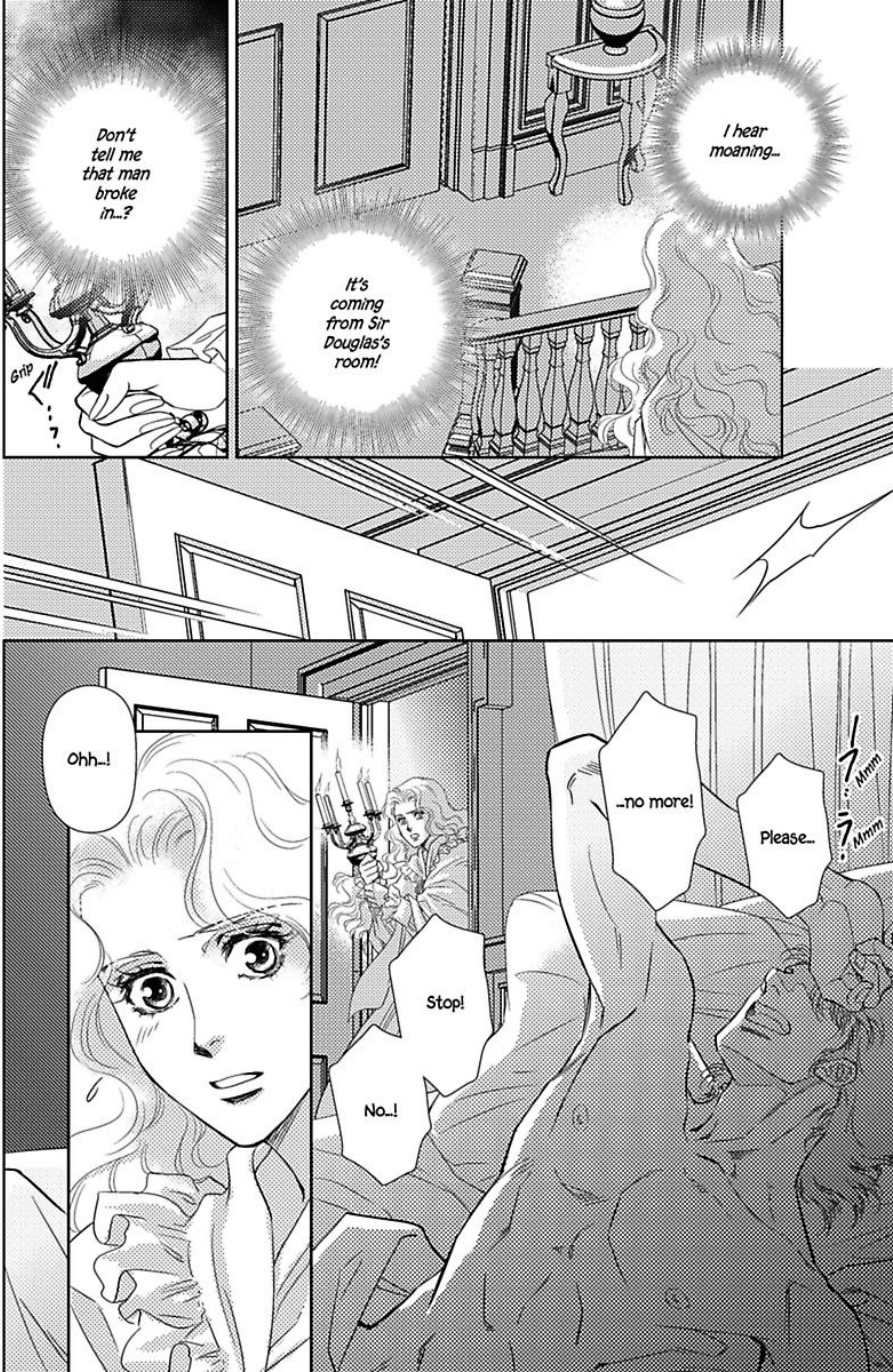

The Bow Street Runners took off after that cur.
Miss Bergerine's wound needs proper care,
Drury!
Indeed.
Sir Douglas?
...
Don't bother asking me to put you down.
Thank you, Drury.

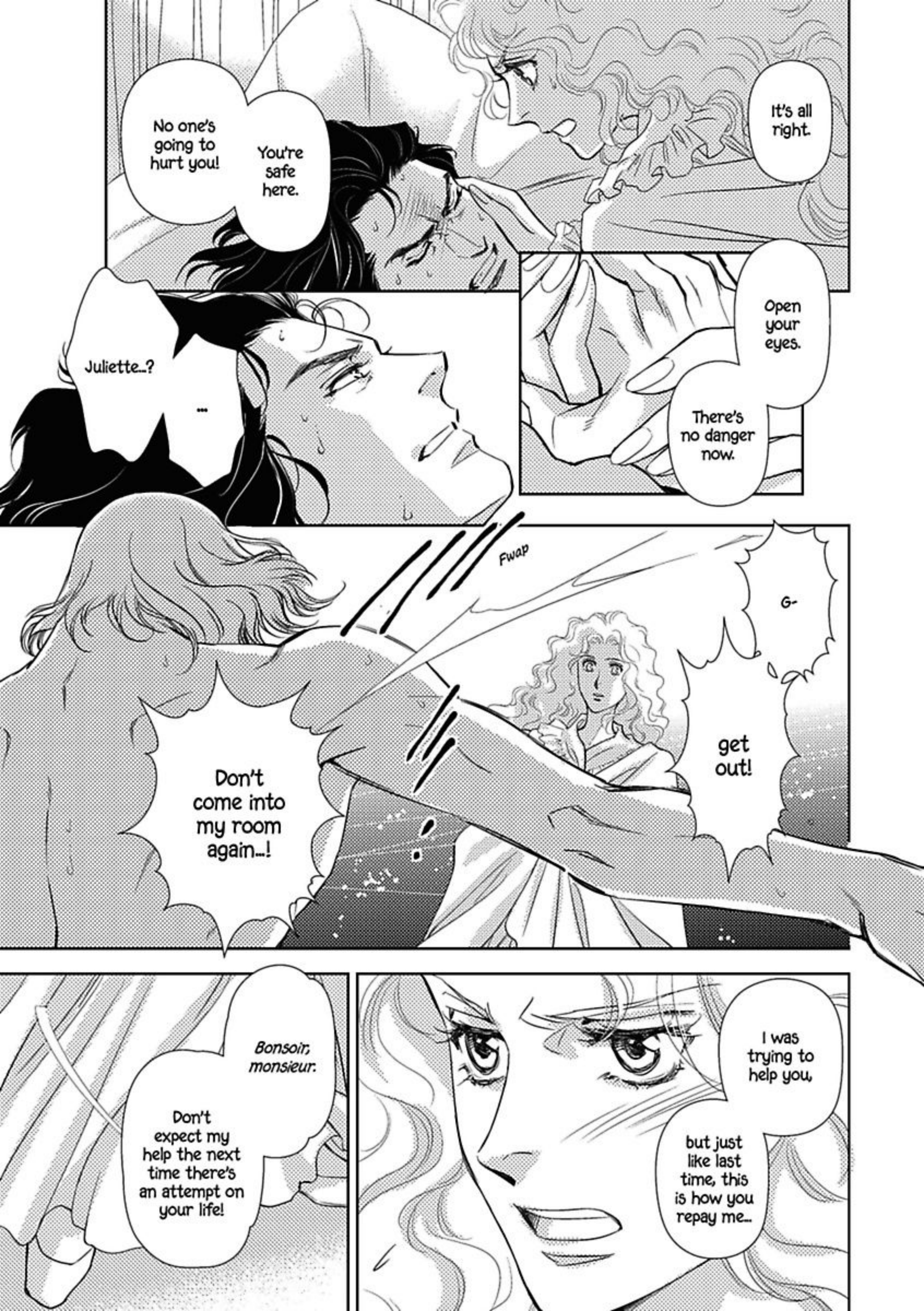

Thank you...
How is Miss Bergerine?
She's resting in her room.
Thankfully, her wound doesn't seem bad.
Drury,
Miss Bergerine is my guest.
I'm responsible for her well-being.
It's my fault Miss Bergerine was exposed to danger–
That's not what I'm worried about, Drury.

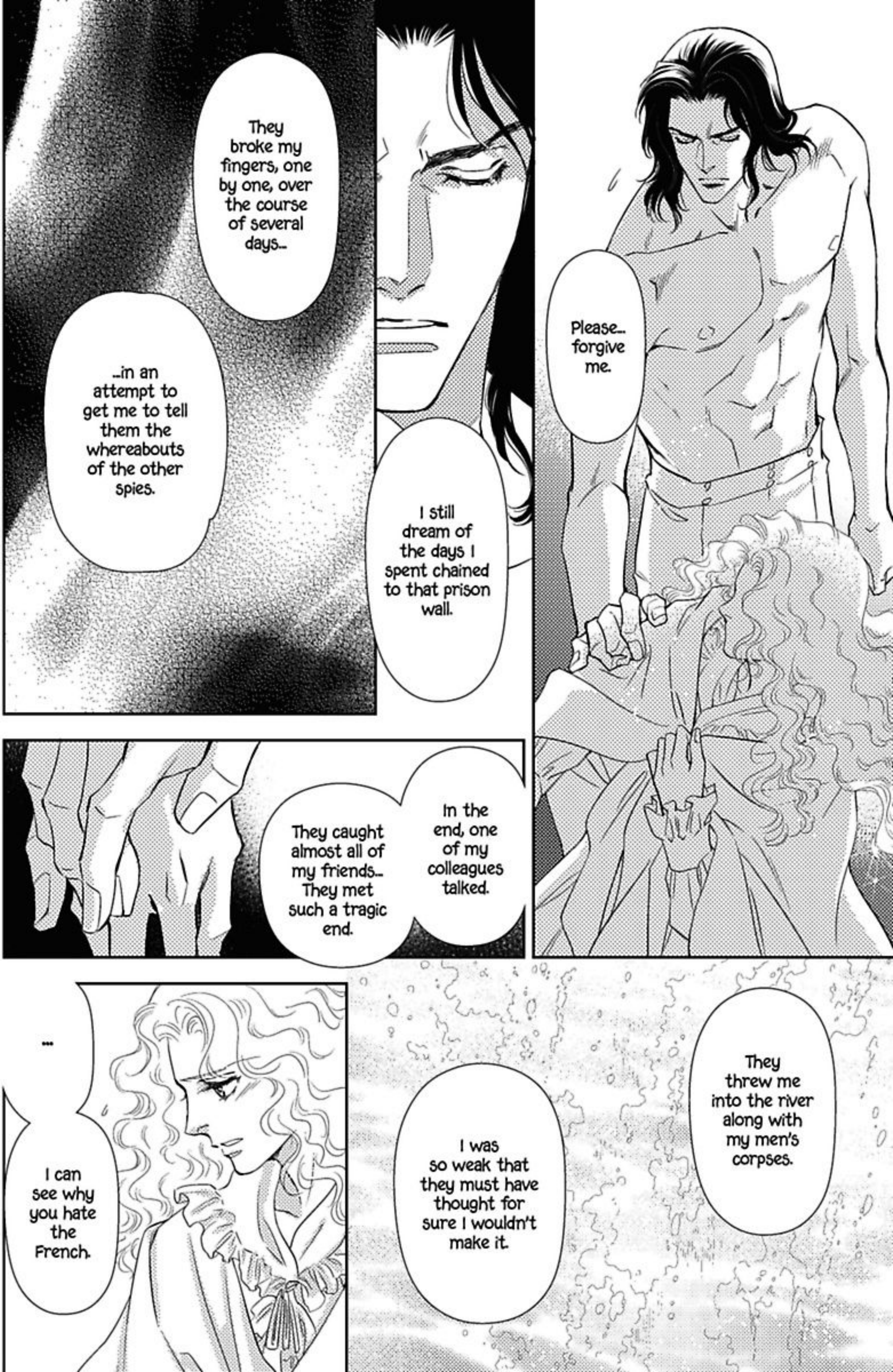

...
Well, no need to worry.
Once this incident is resolved, the two of us will be out of your home and on our separate ways.
She says she wants to go back to France and become a successful seamstress.
I don't intend to spend the rest of my life in a gilded birdcage.
What she wants for herself is to stand on her own two feet.
Lead her own life and find her own future...
I can't get in her way...!

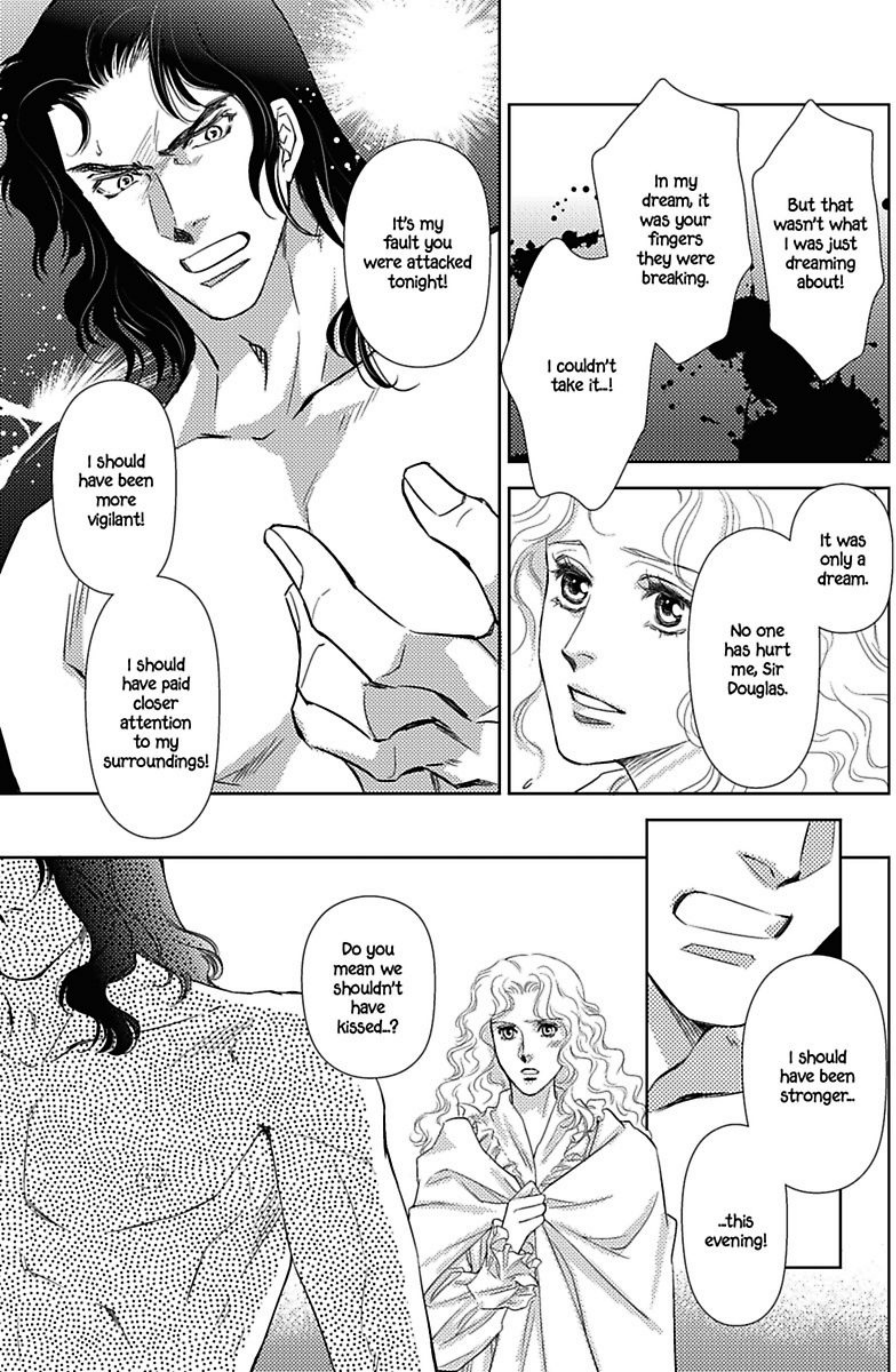

It's not my place...
That man got away in the end.
Perhaps I wasn't ready to let this thing end so soon?
Still, somehow...
...I'm a bit relieved.

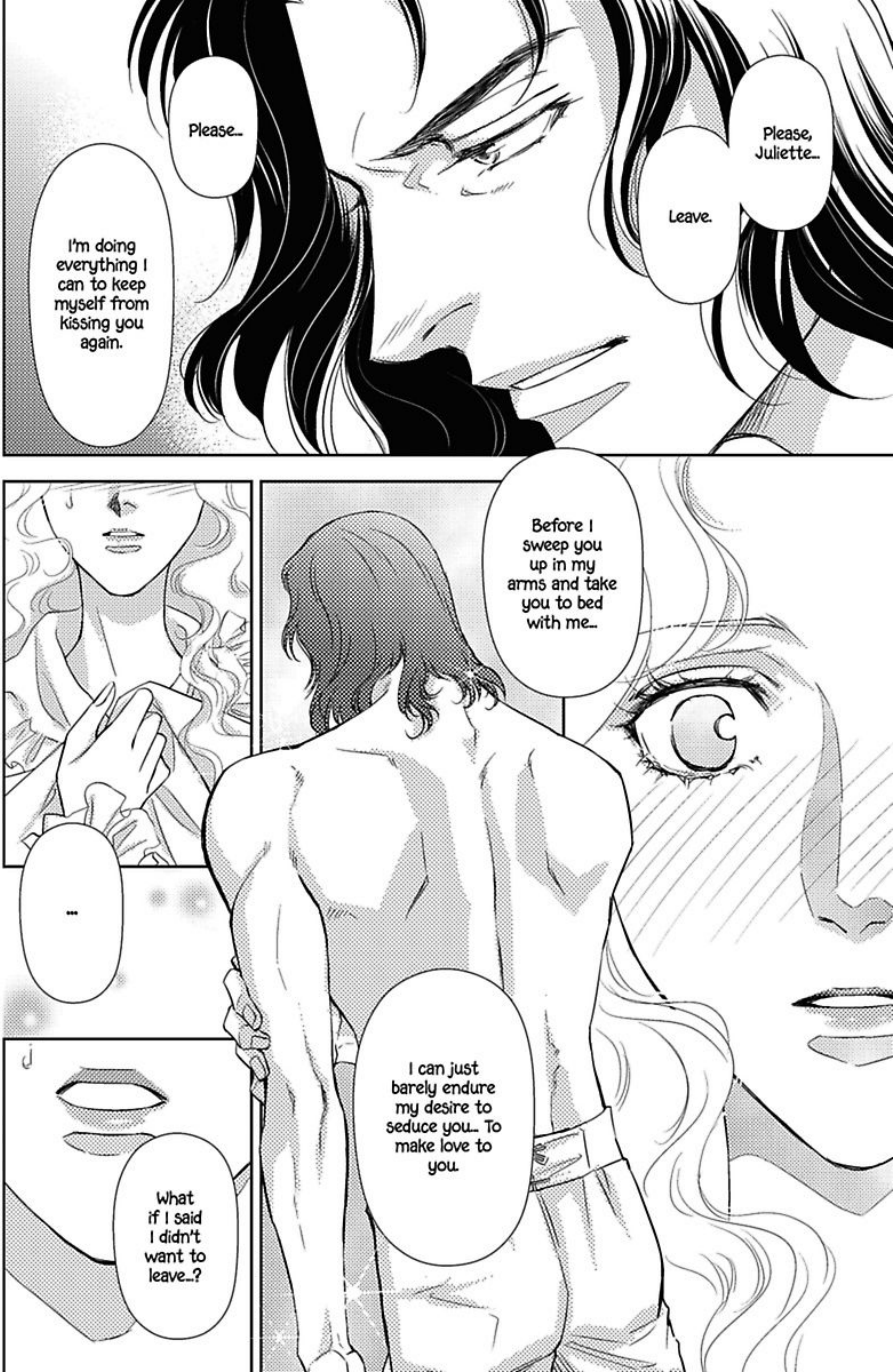

That was neither an accident nor an act...
...but my honest passion and desire.
No...
...
Though I wish we could spend the future together, our hearts as one, it's not meant to be.
He's meant to marry an Englishwoman of the same noble stock.
Hmm?

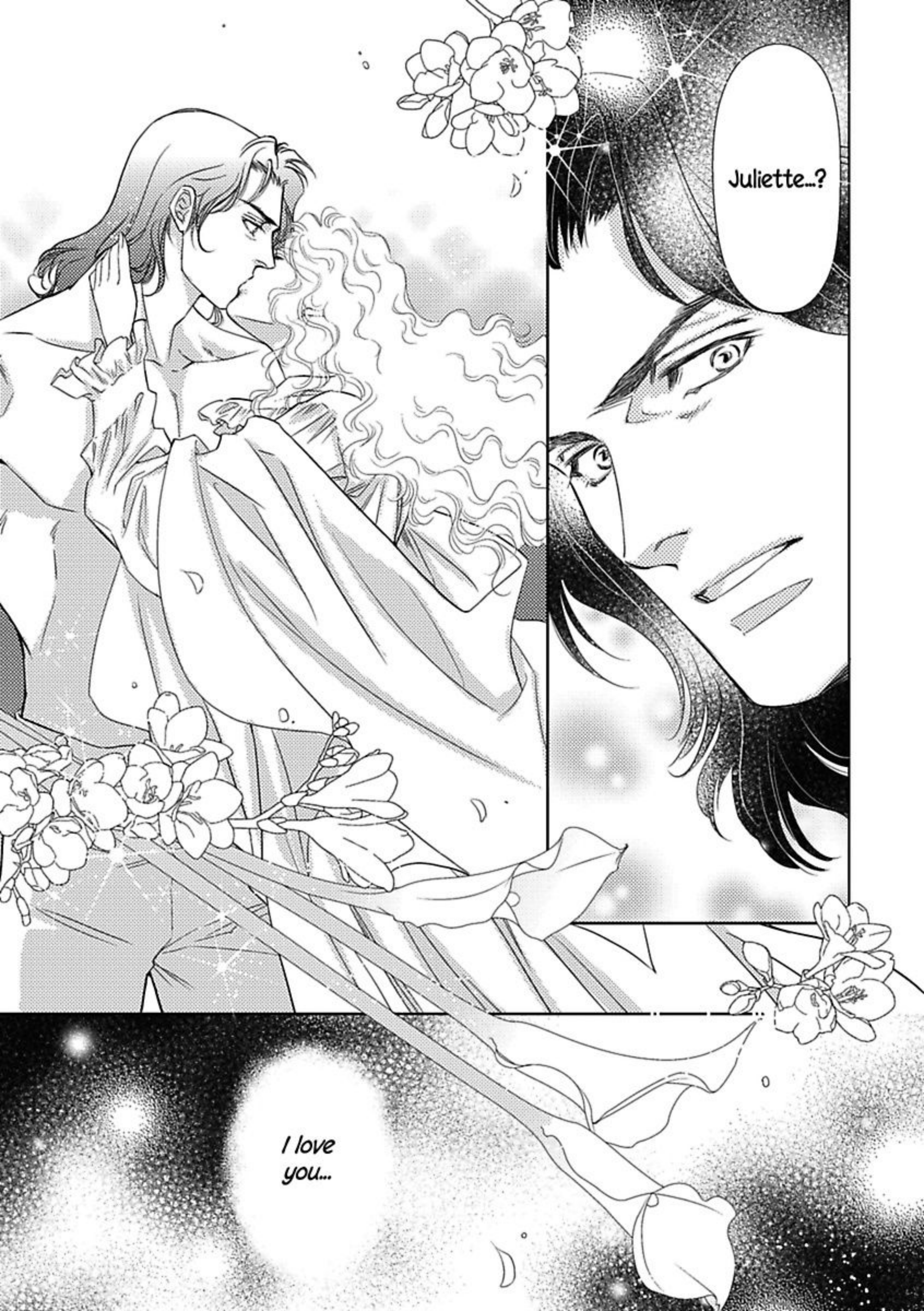

I hear moaning...
It's coming from Sir Douglas's room!
Don't tell me that man broke in...?
Grip
Mmm
Mmm
Please...
...no more!
Stop!
No...!
Ohh...!

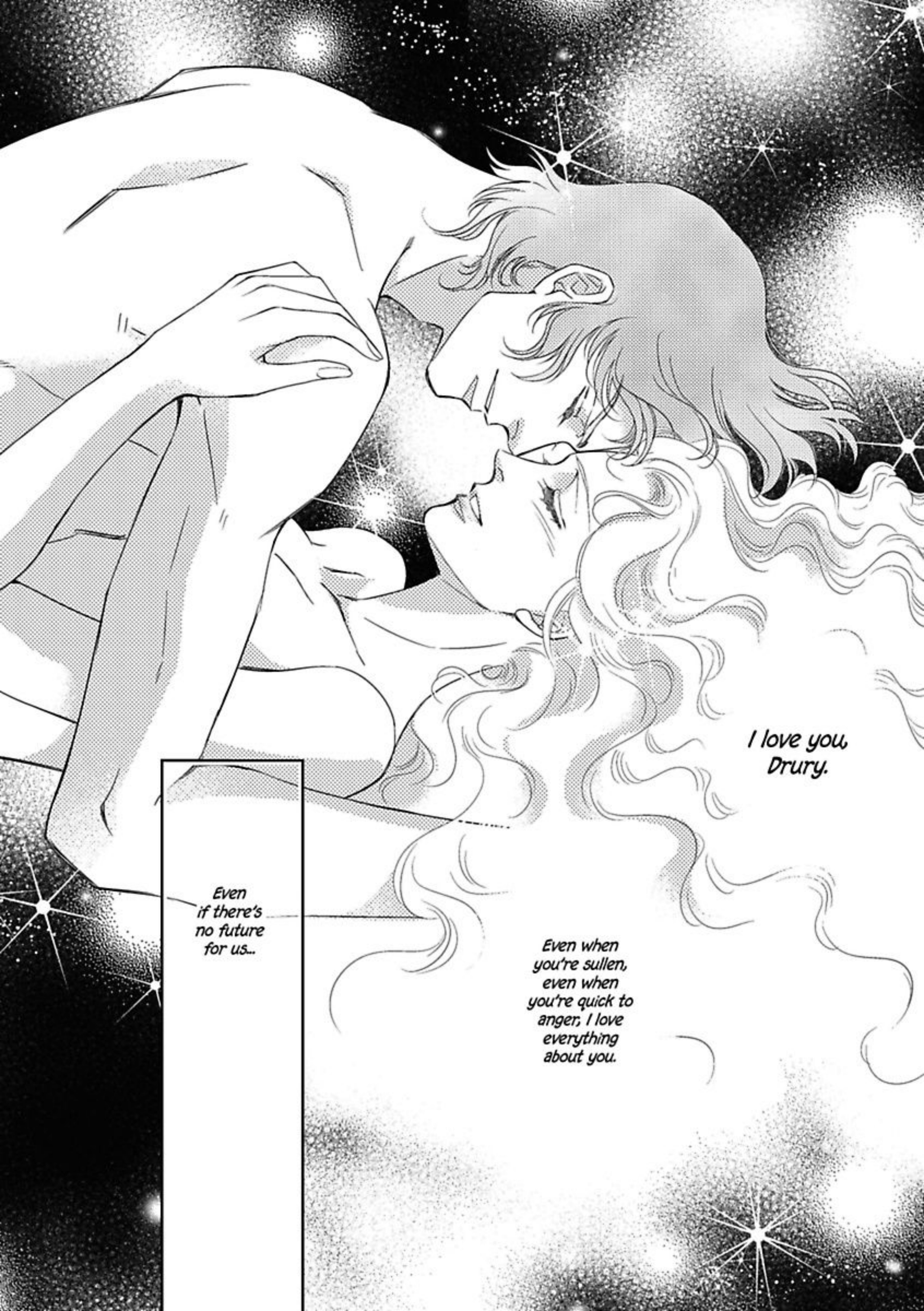

It's all right.
No one's going to hurt you! You're safe here.
Open your eyes.
There's no danger now.
Juliette...?
...
Fwap
G-
get out!
Don't come into my room again...!
I was trying to help you,
but just like last time, this is how you repay me...
Bonsoir, monsieur.
Don't expect my help the next time there's an attempt on your life!

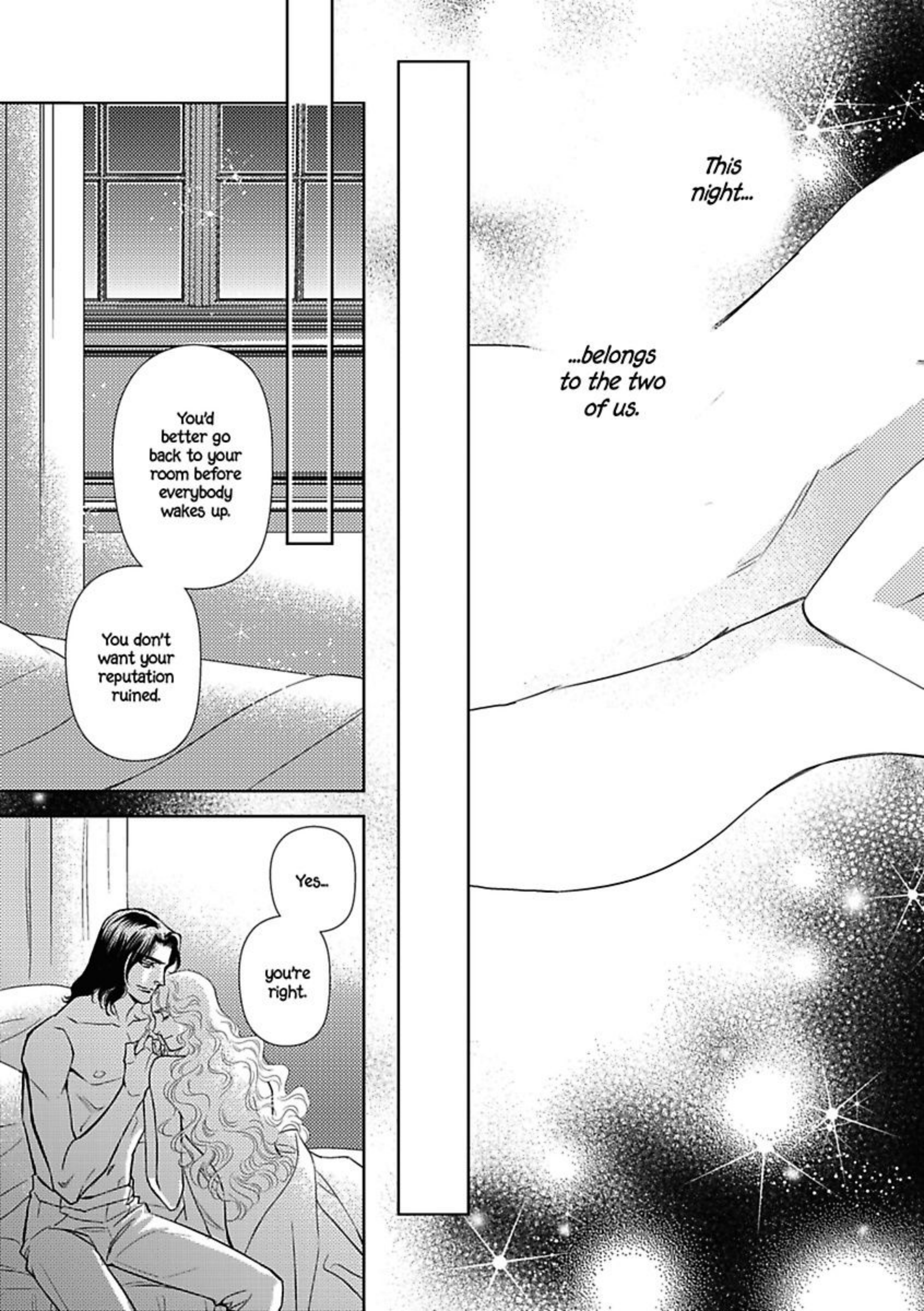

Please... forgive me.
I still dream of the days I spent chained to that prison wall.
They broke my fingers, one by one, over the course of several days...
...in an attempt to get me to tell them the whereabouts of the other spies.
In the end, one of my colleagues talked.
They caught almost all of my friends... They met such a tragic end.
They threw me into the river along with my men's corpses.
I was so weak that they must have thought for sure I wouldn't make it.
...
I can see why you hate the French.

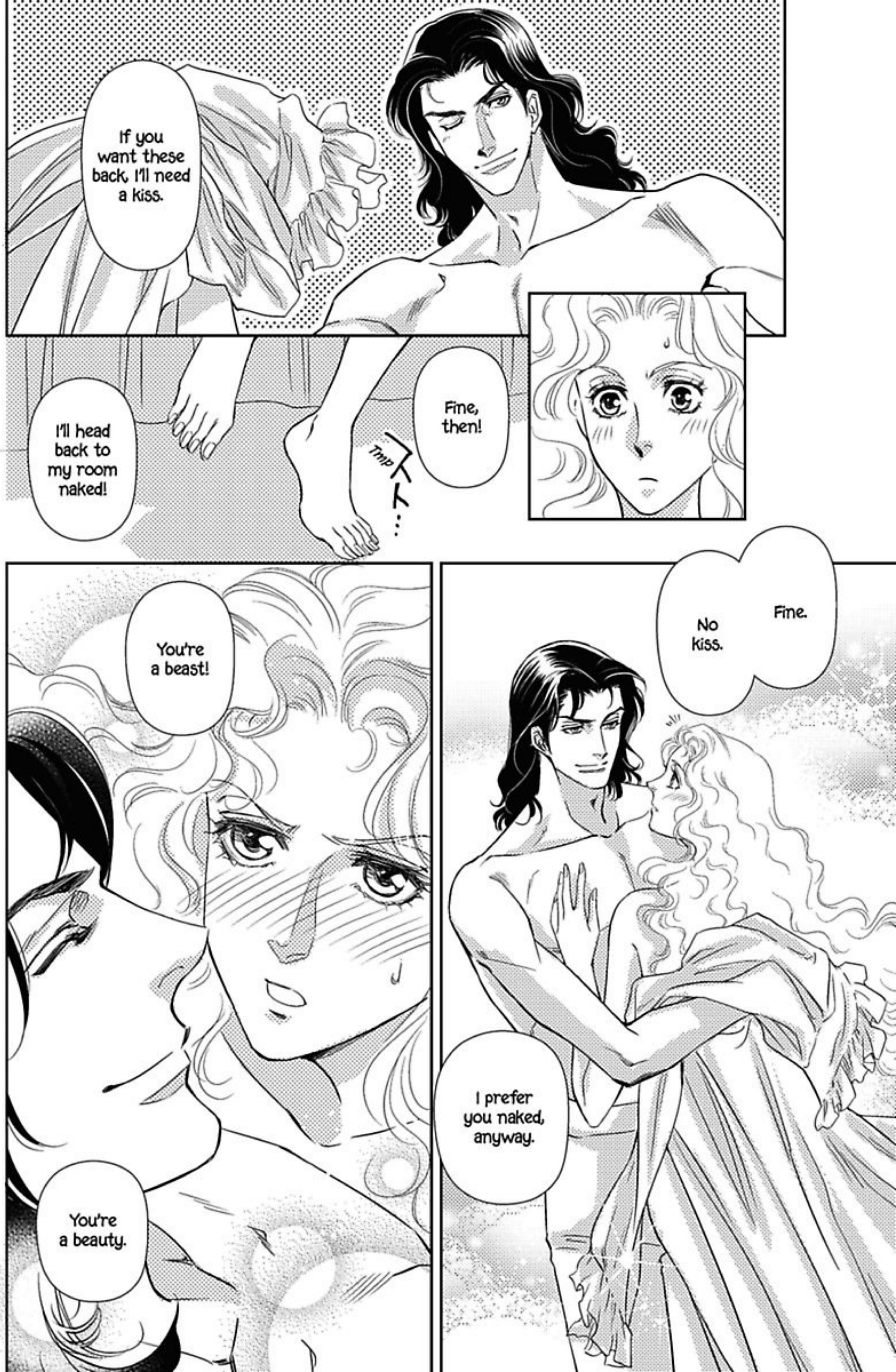

But that wasn't what I was just dreaming about!
In my dream, it was your fingers they were breaking.
I couldn't take it...!
It was only a dream.
No one has hurt me, Sir Douglas.
It's my fault you were attacked tonight!
I should have been more vigilant!
I should have paid closer attention to my surroundings!
I should have been stronger...
...this evening!
Do you mean we shouldn't have kissed...?

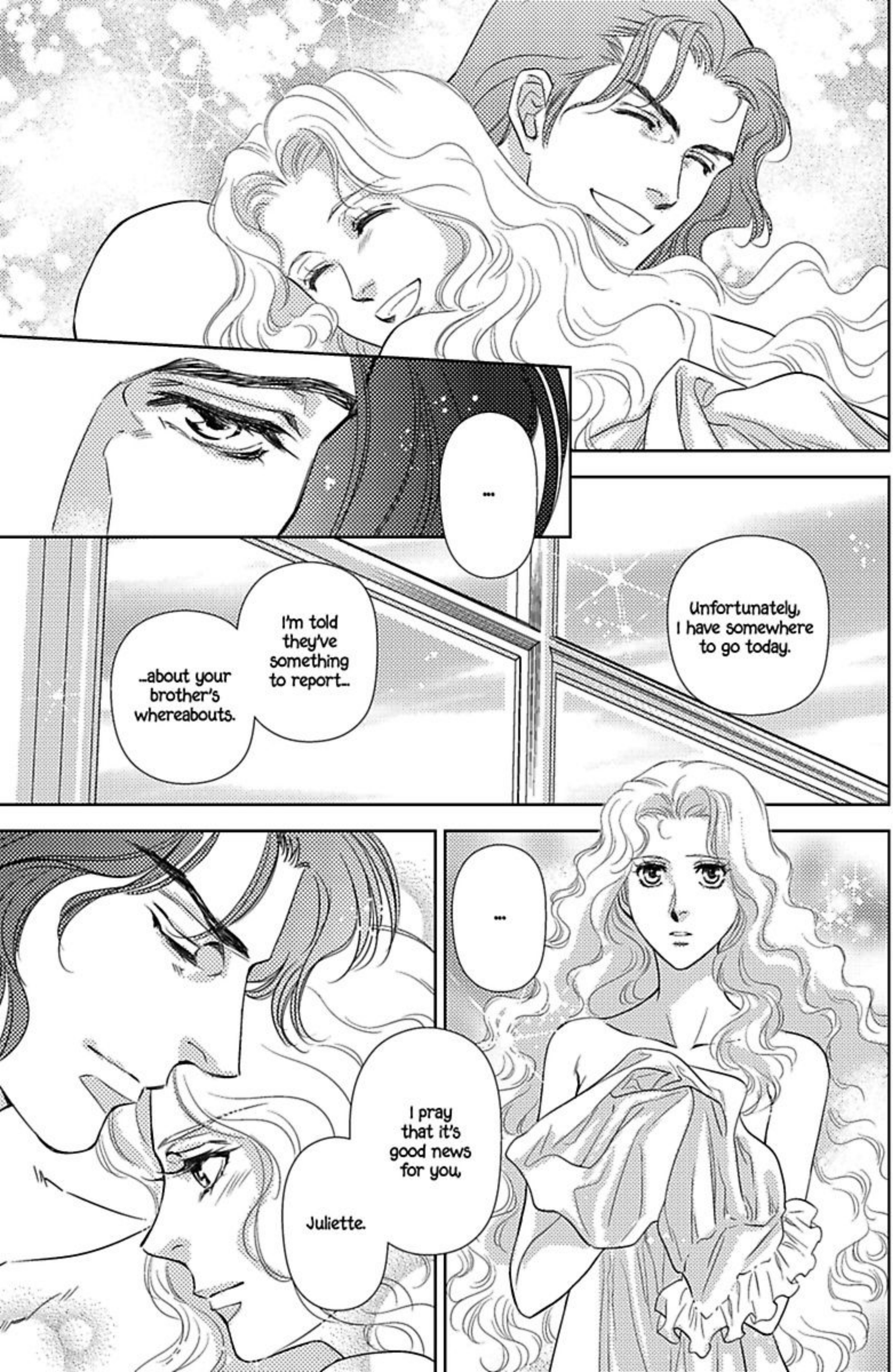

Please, Juliette…
Leave.
Please…
I'm doing everything I can to keep myself from kissing you again.
Before I sweep you up in my arms and take you to bed with me…
I can just barely endure my desire to seduce you… To make love to you.
…
What if I said I didn't want to leave…?

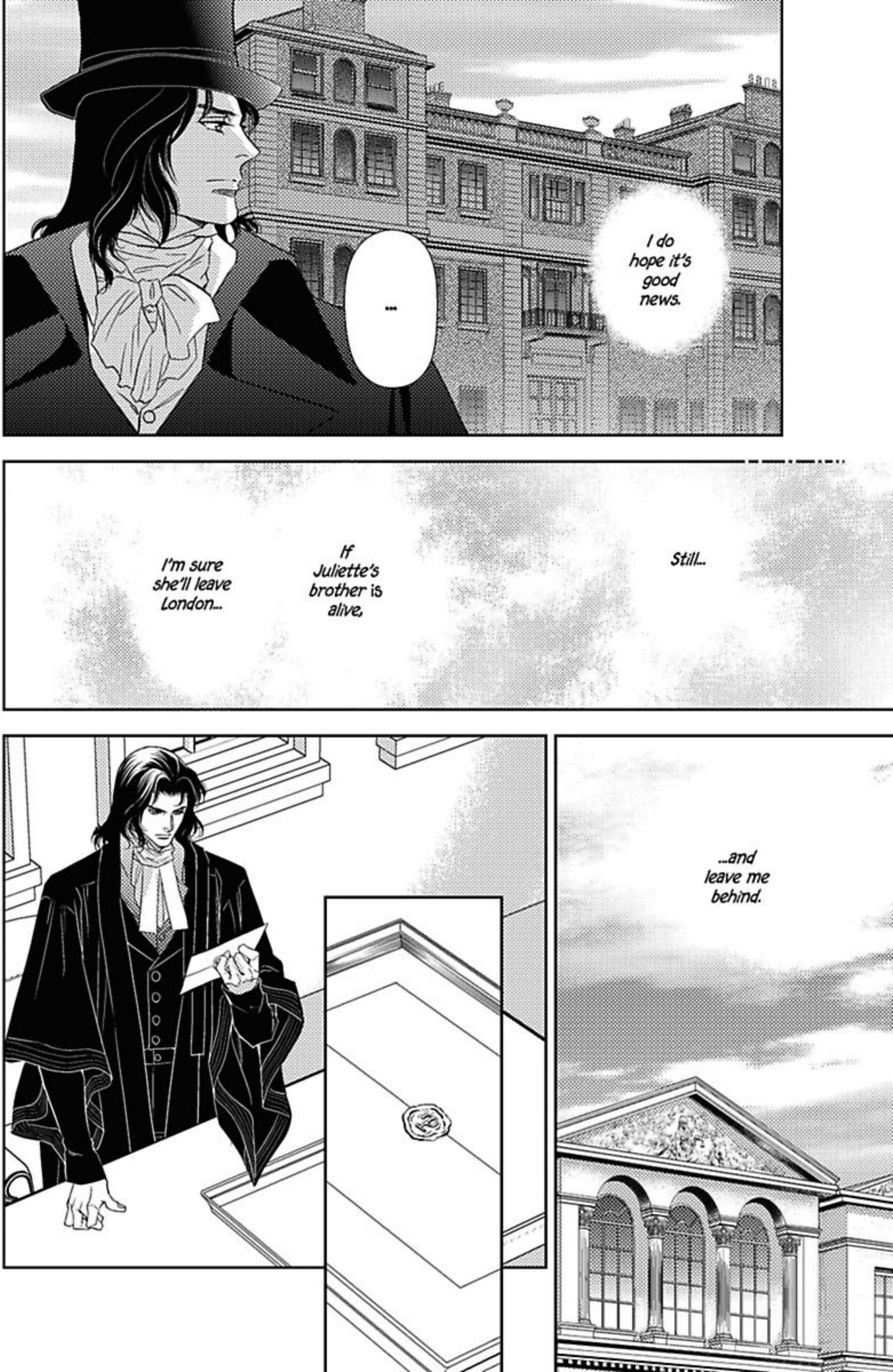

Juliette...?
I love you...

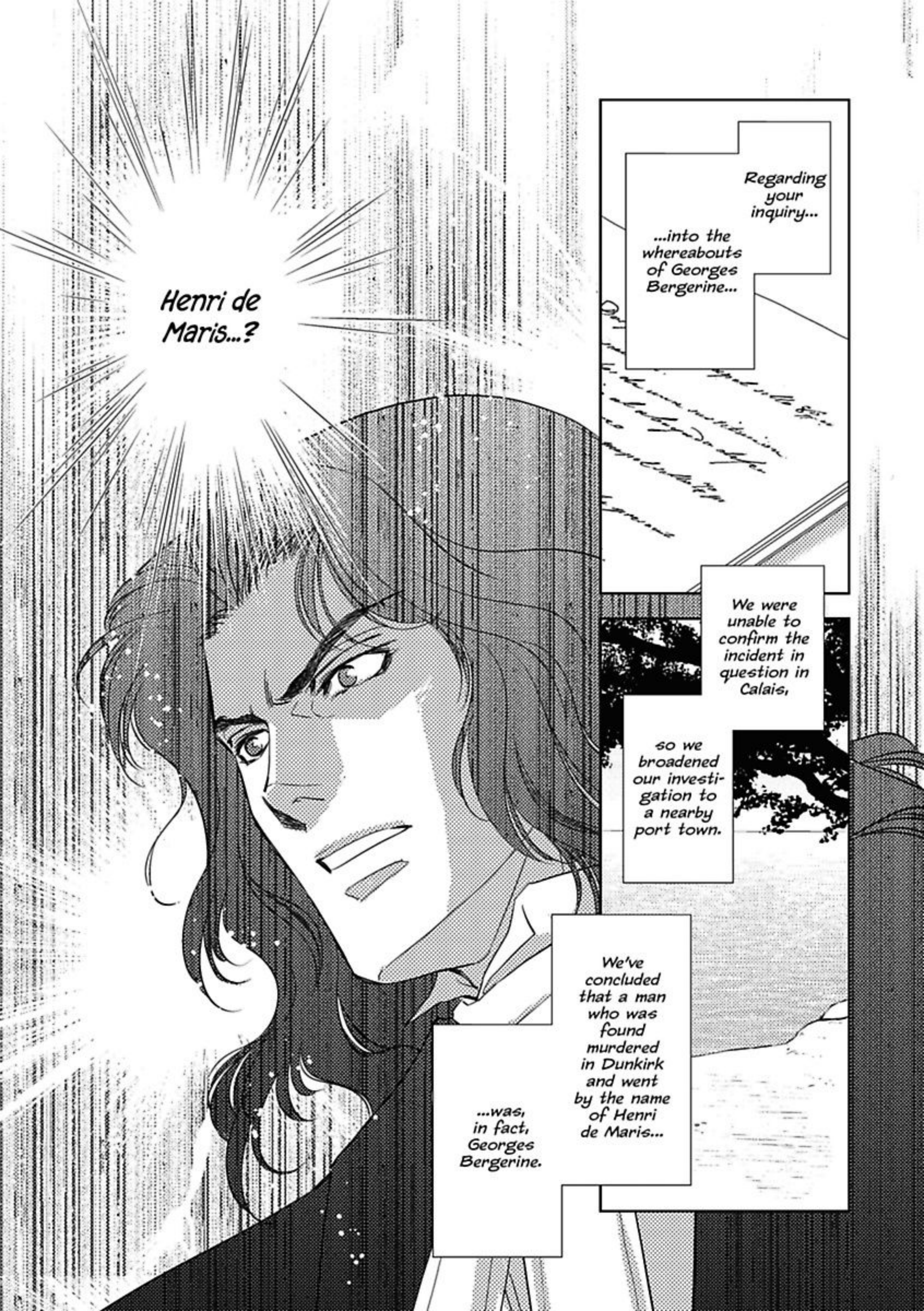

I love you, Drury.
Even when you're sullen, even when you're quick to anger, I love everything about you.
Even if there's no future for us...

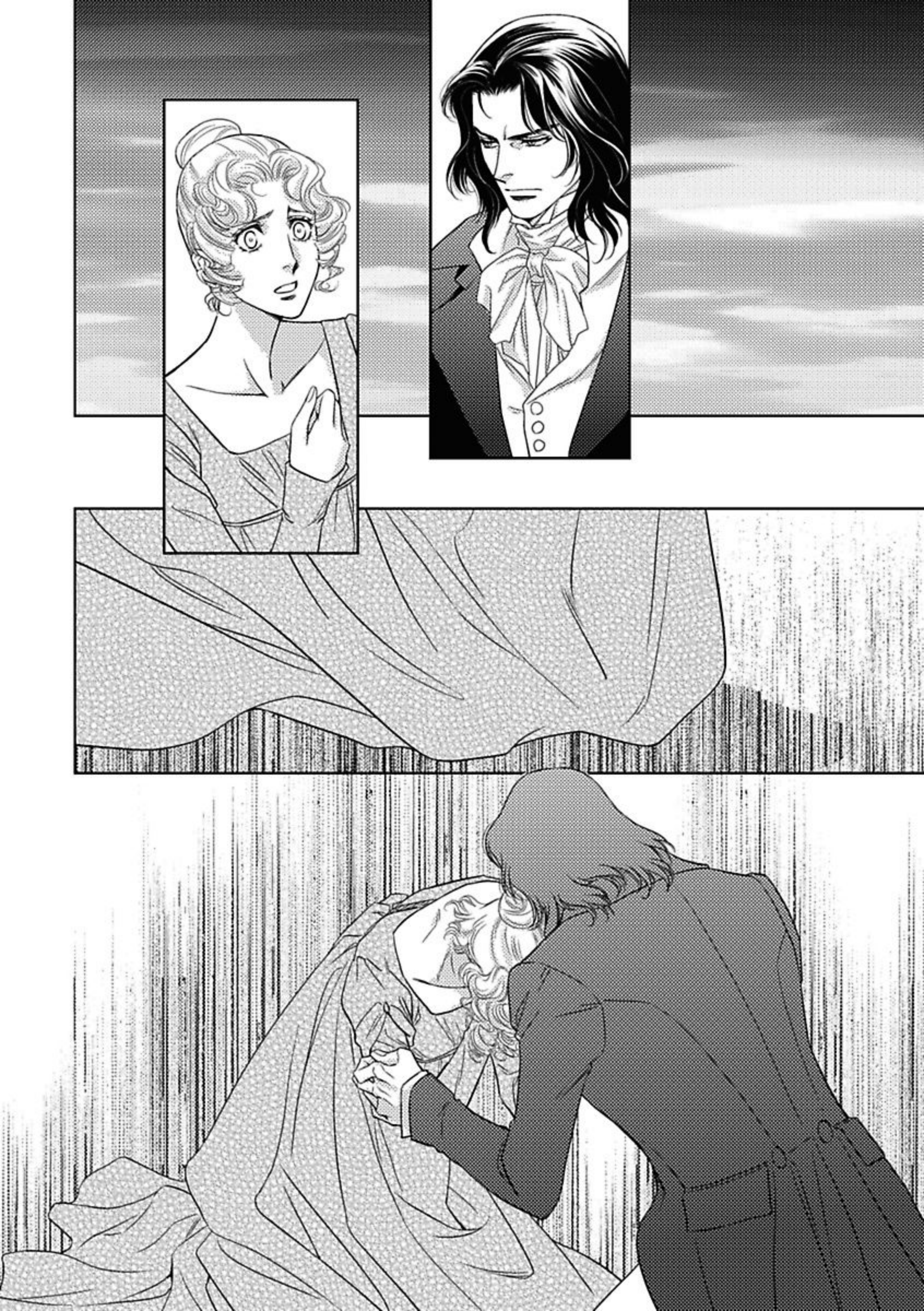

This night...
...belongs to the two of us.
You'd better go back to your room before everybody wakes up.
You don't want your reputation ruined.
Yes...
you're right.

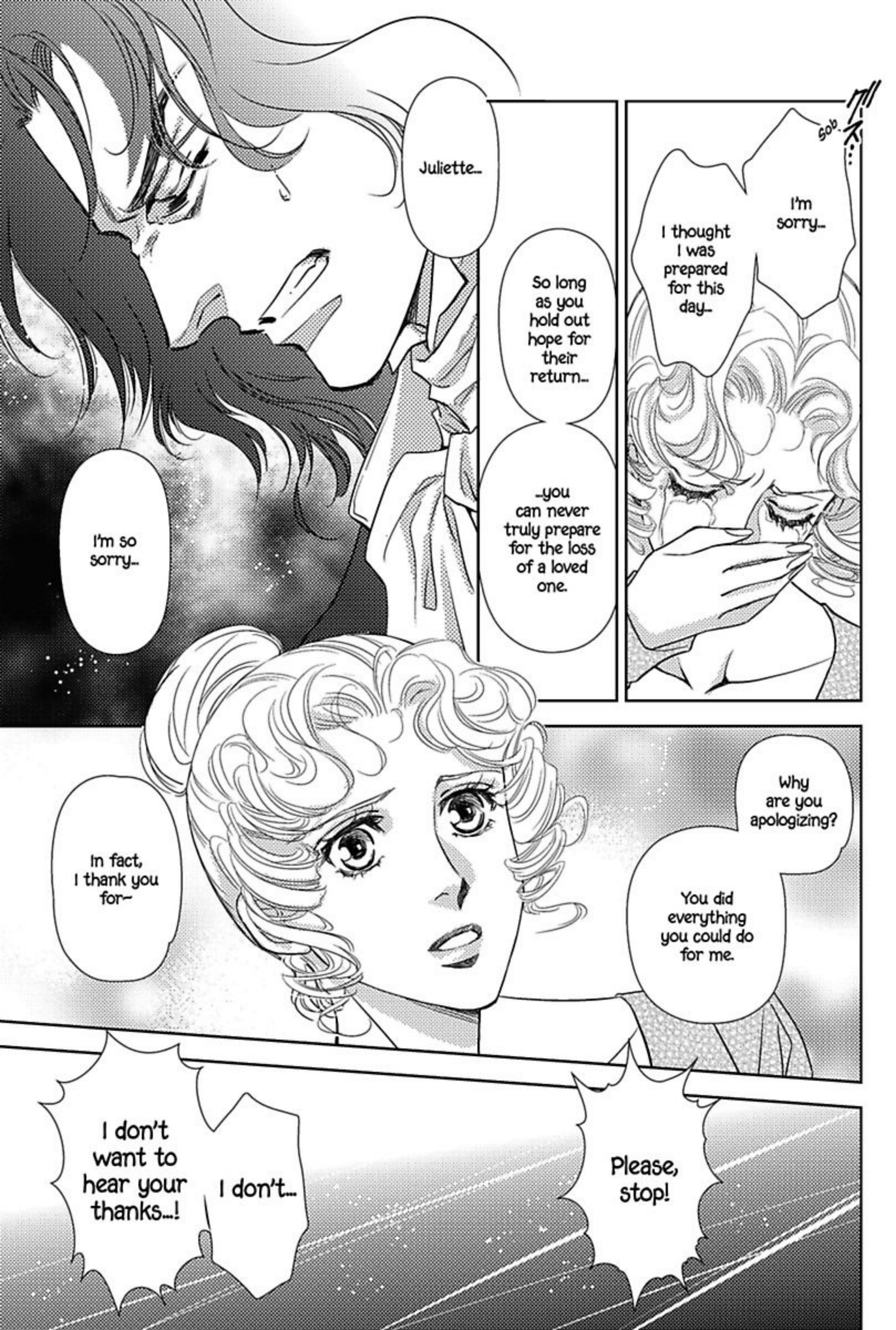

If you want these back, I'll need a kiss.
Fine, then!
I'll head back to my room naked!
Tmp
ストト…
Fine.
No kiss.
I prefer you naked, anyway.
You're a beast!
You're a beauty.

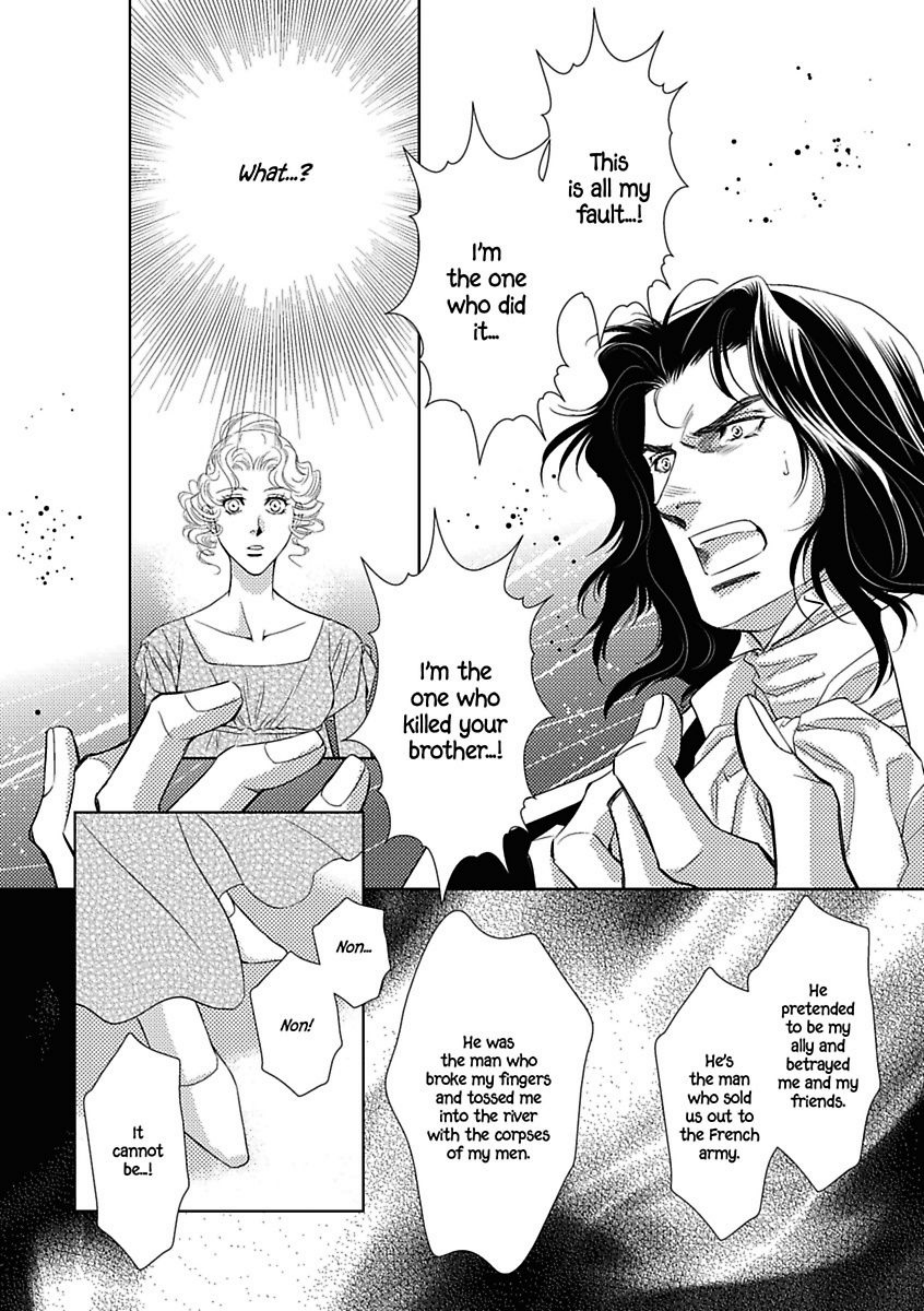

...
Unfortunately, I have somewhere to go today.
I'm told they've something to report...
...about your brother's whereabouts.
...
I pray that it's good news for you,
Juliette.

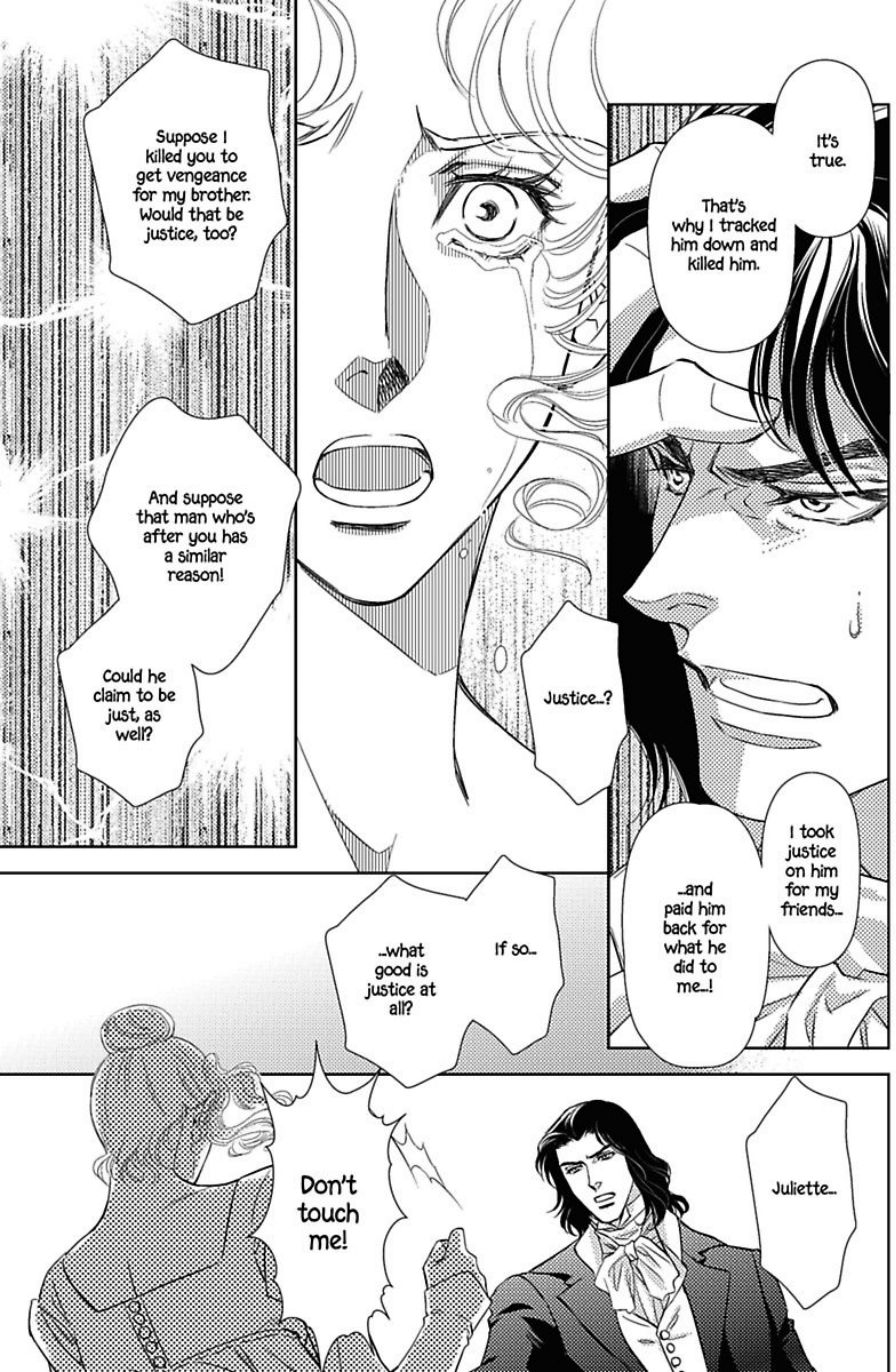

I do hope it's good news.
...
Still...
If Juliette's brother is alive,
I'm sure she'll leave London...
...and leave me behind.

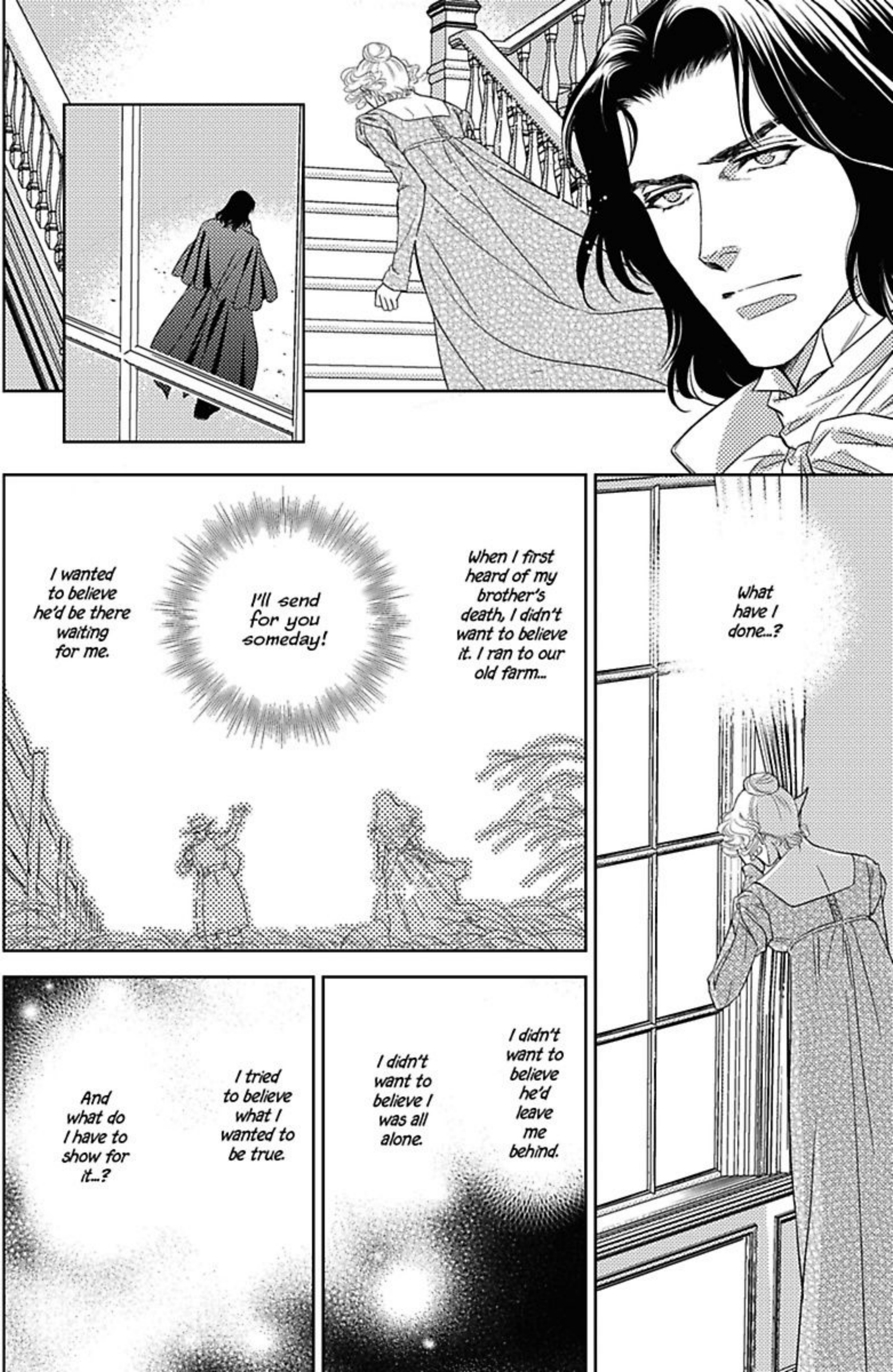

Regarding your inquiry...
...into the whereabouts of Georges Bergerine...
We were unable to confirm the incident in question in Calais,
so we broadened our investigation to a nearby port town.
We've concluded that a man who was found murdered in Dunkirk and went by the name of Henri de Maris...
...was, in fact, Georges Bergerine.
Henri de Maris...?

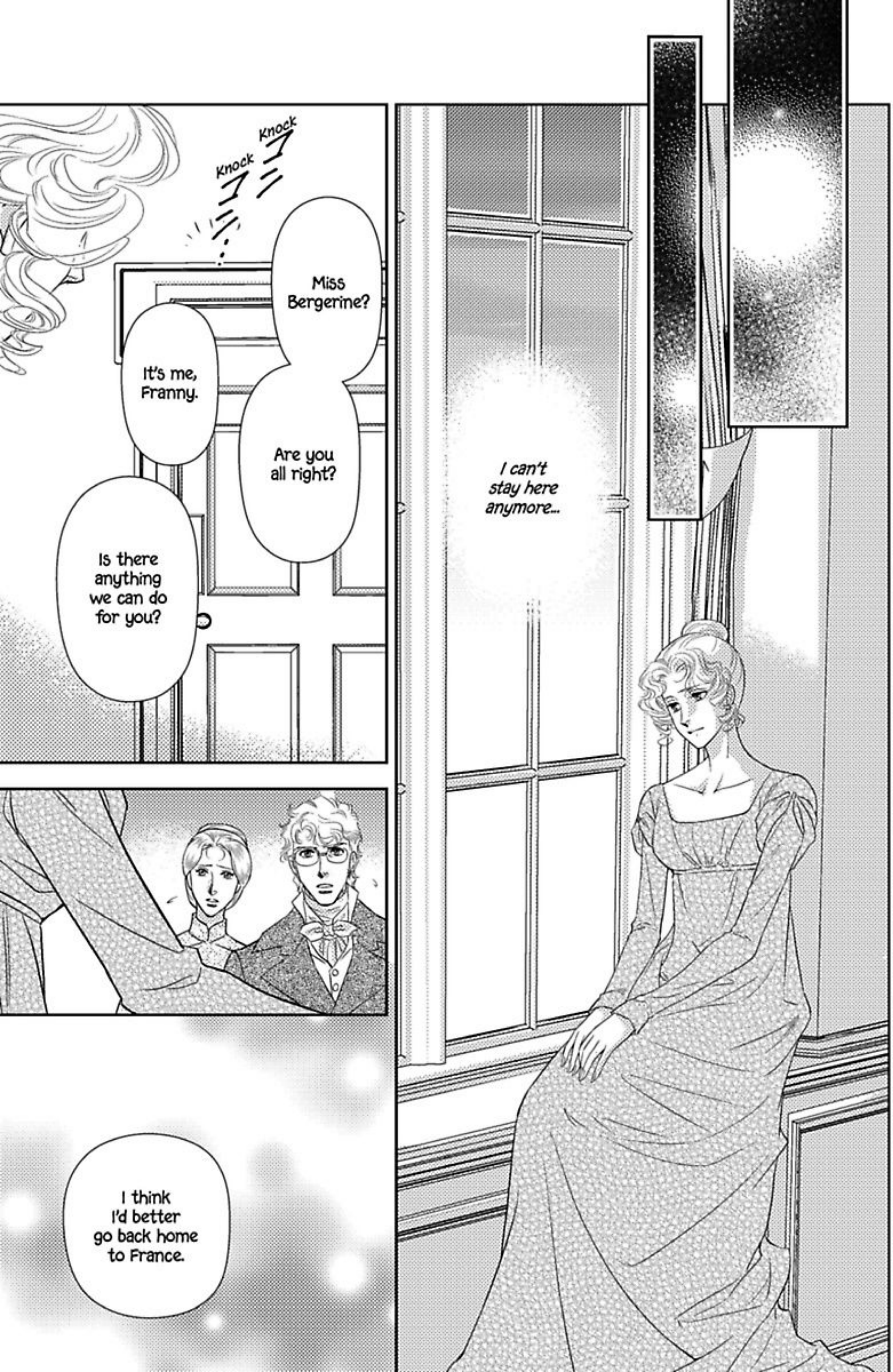


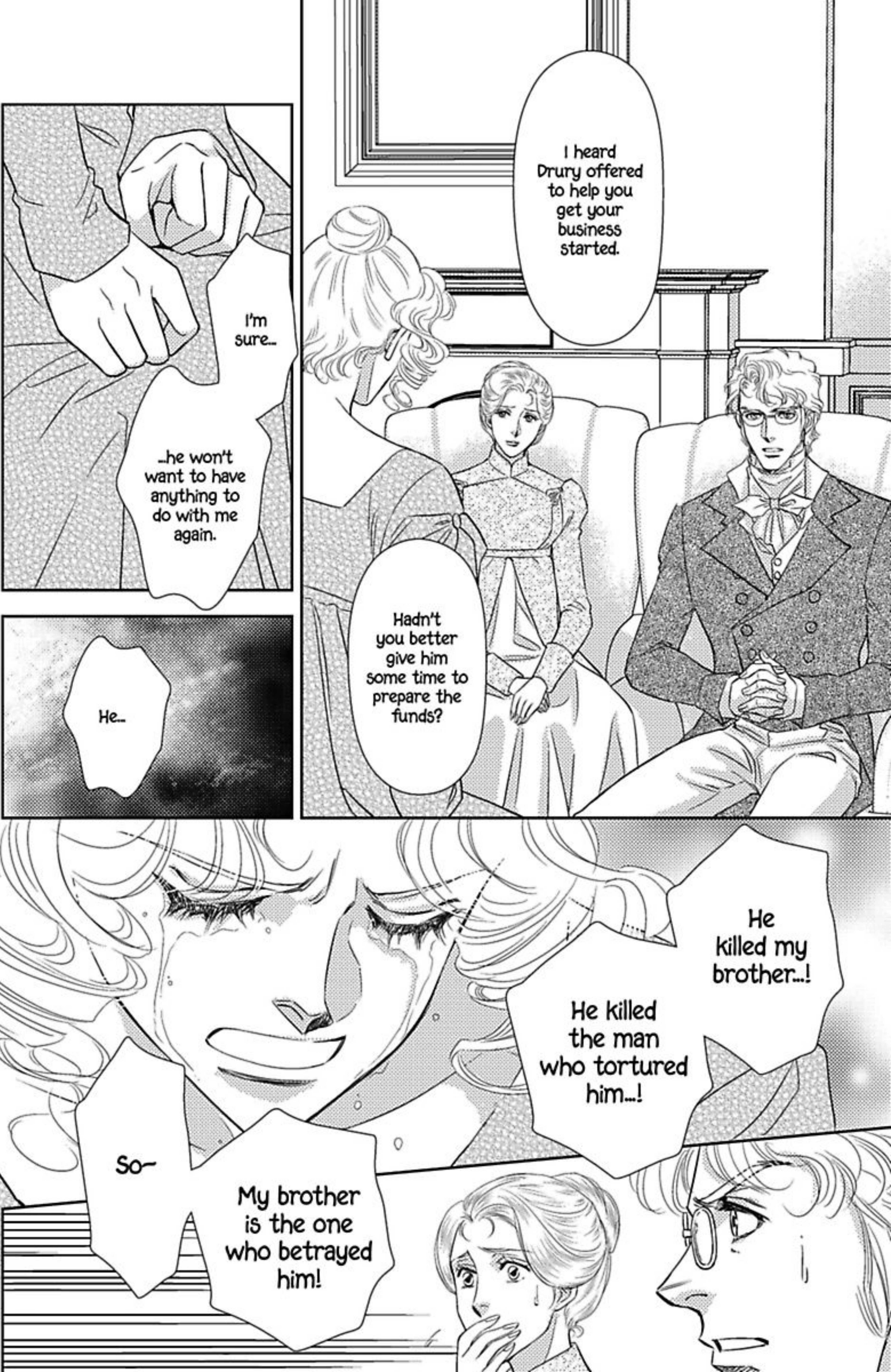

Sob.
I'm sorry...
I thought I was prepared for this day...
So long as you hold out hope for their return...
...you can never truly prepare for the loss of a loved one.
Juliette...
I'm so sorry...
Why are you apologizing?
You did everything you could do for me.
In fact, I thank you for–
Please, stop!
I don't...
I don't want to hear your thanks...!

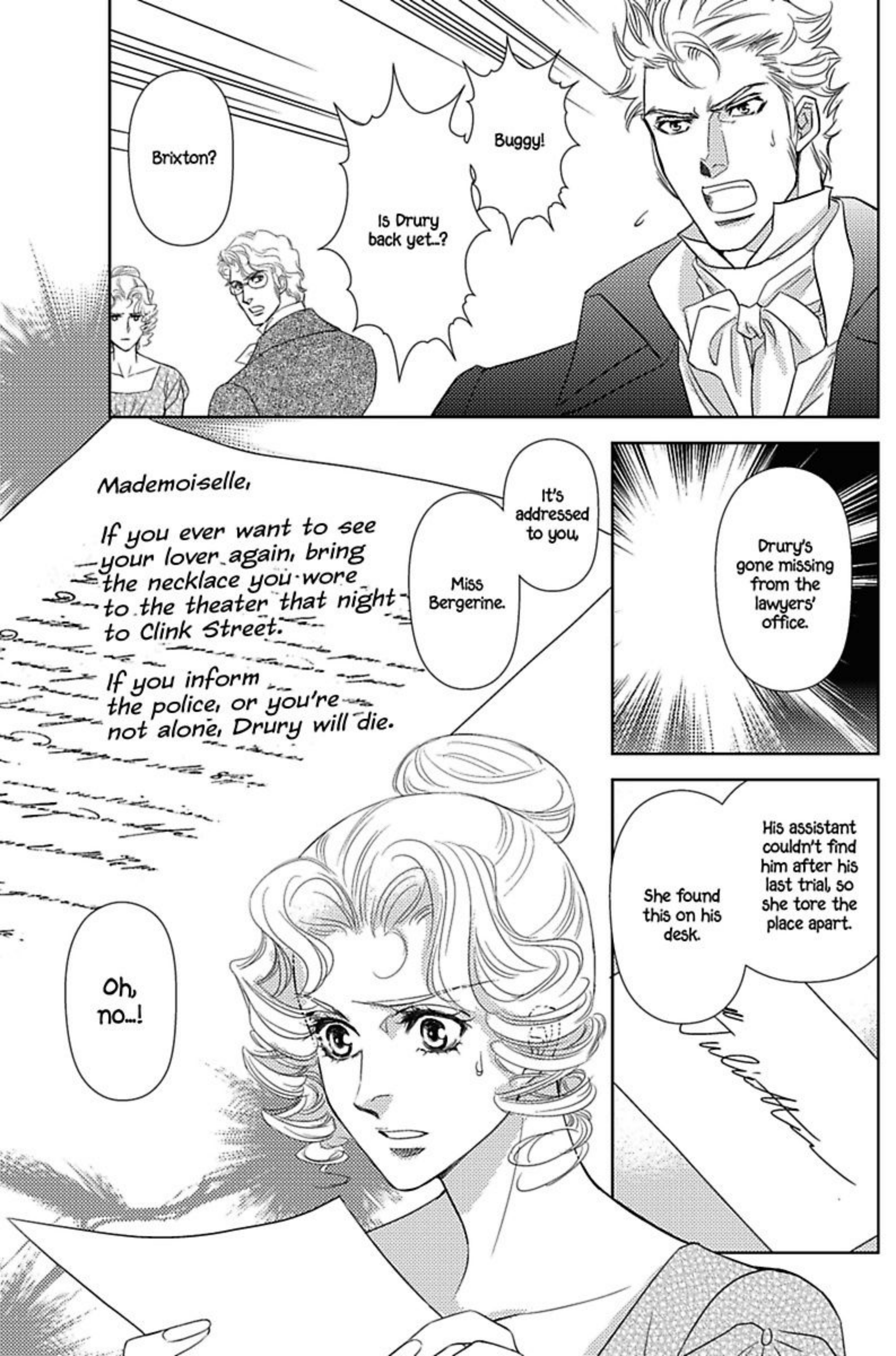

This is all my fault...!
I'm the one who did it...
What...?
I'm the one who killed your brother...!
He pretended to be my ally and betrayed me and my friends.
He's the man who sold us out to the French army.
He was the man who broke my fingers and tossed me into the river with the corpses of my men.
Non...
Non!
It cannot be...!


It's true.
That's why I tracked him down and killed him.
I took justice on him for my friends...
...and paid him back for what he did to me...!
Justice...?
Suppose I killed you to get vengeance for my brother. Would that be justice, too?
And suppose that man who's after you has a similar reason!
Could he claim to be just, as well?
If so...
...what good is justice at all?
Juliette...
Don't touch me!


What have I done...?
When I first heard of my brother's death, I didn't want to believe it. I ran to our old farm...
I'll send for you someday!
I wanted to believe he'd be there waiting for me.
I didn't want to believe he'd leave me behind.
I didn't want to believe I was all alone.
I tried to believe what I wanted to be true.
And what do I have to show for it...?


I can't stay here anymore...
Knock
Knock
Miss Bergerine?
It's me, Franny.
Are you all right?
Is there anything we can do for you?
I think I'd better go back home to France.

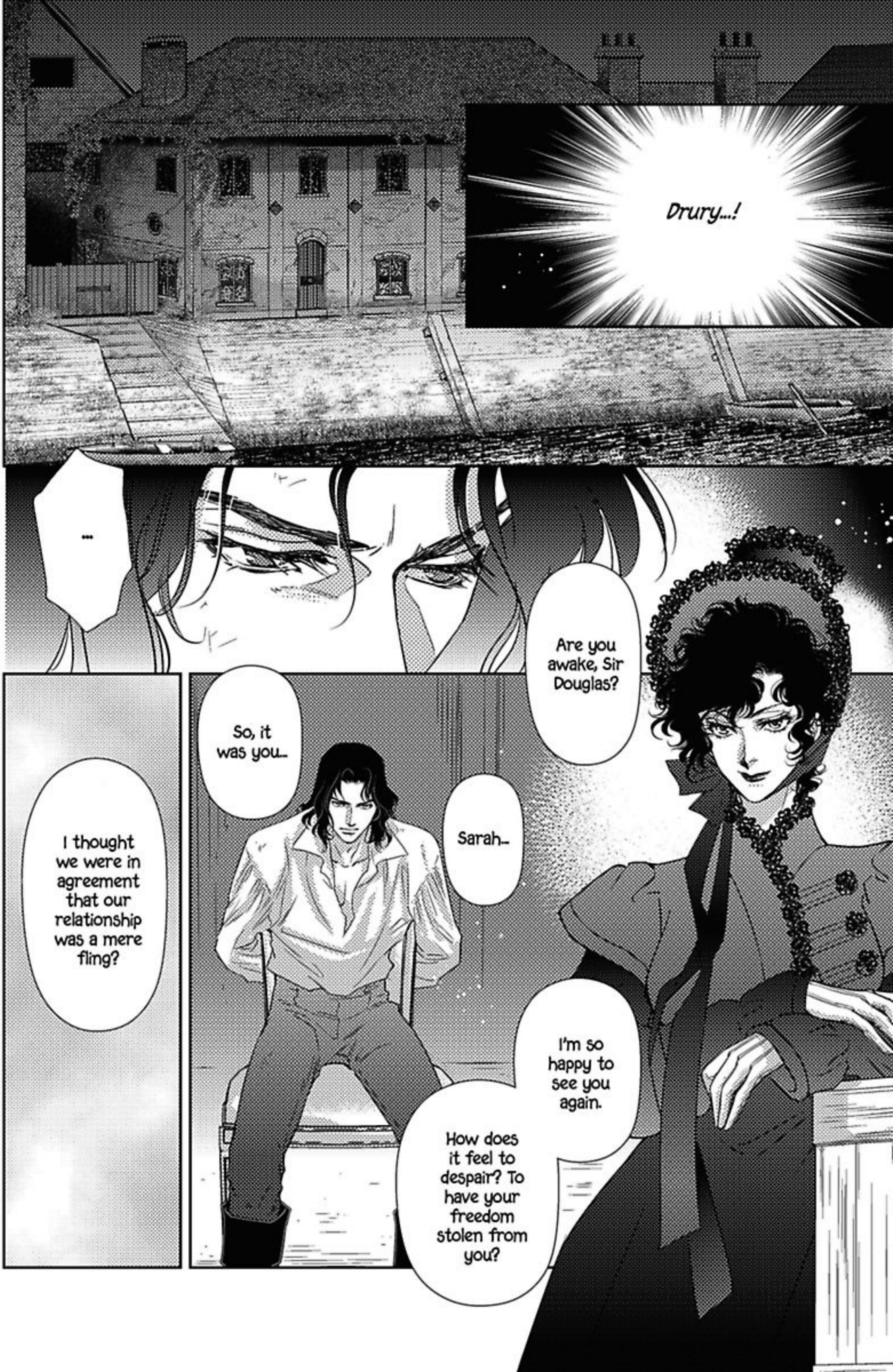

I heard Drury offered to help you get your business started.
Hadn't you better give him some time to prepare the funds?
I'm sure...
...he won't want to have anything to do with me again.
He...
He killed my brother...!
He killed the man who tortured him...!
So–
My brother is the one who betrayed him!

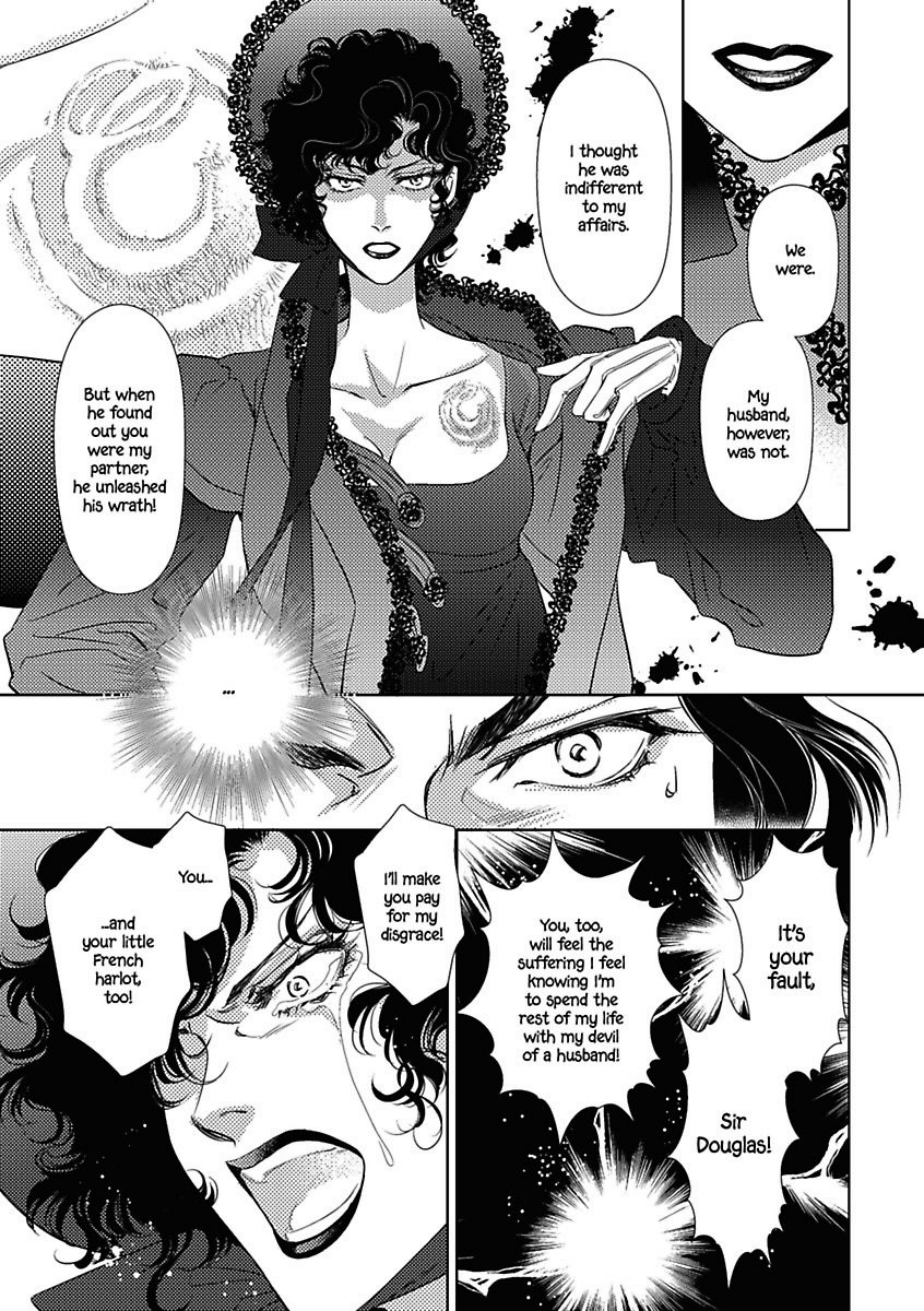

Buggy!
Is Drury back yet..?
Brixton?
Drury's gone missing from the lawyers' office.
His assistant couldn't find him after his last trial, so she tore the place apart.
She found this on his desk.
It's addressed to you, Miss Bergerine.
Oh, no...!

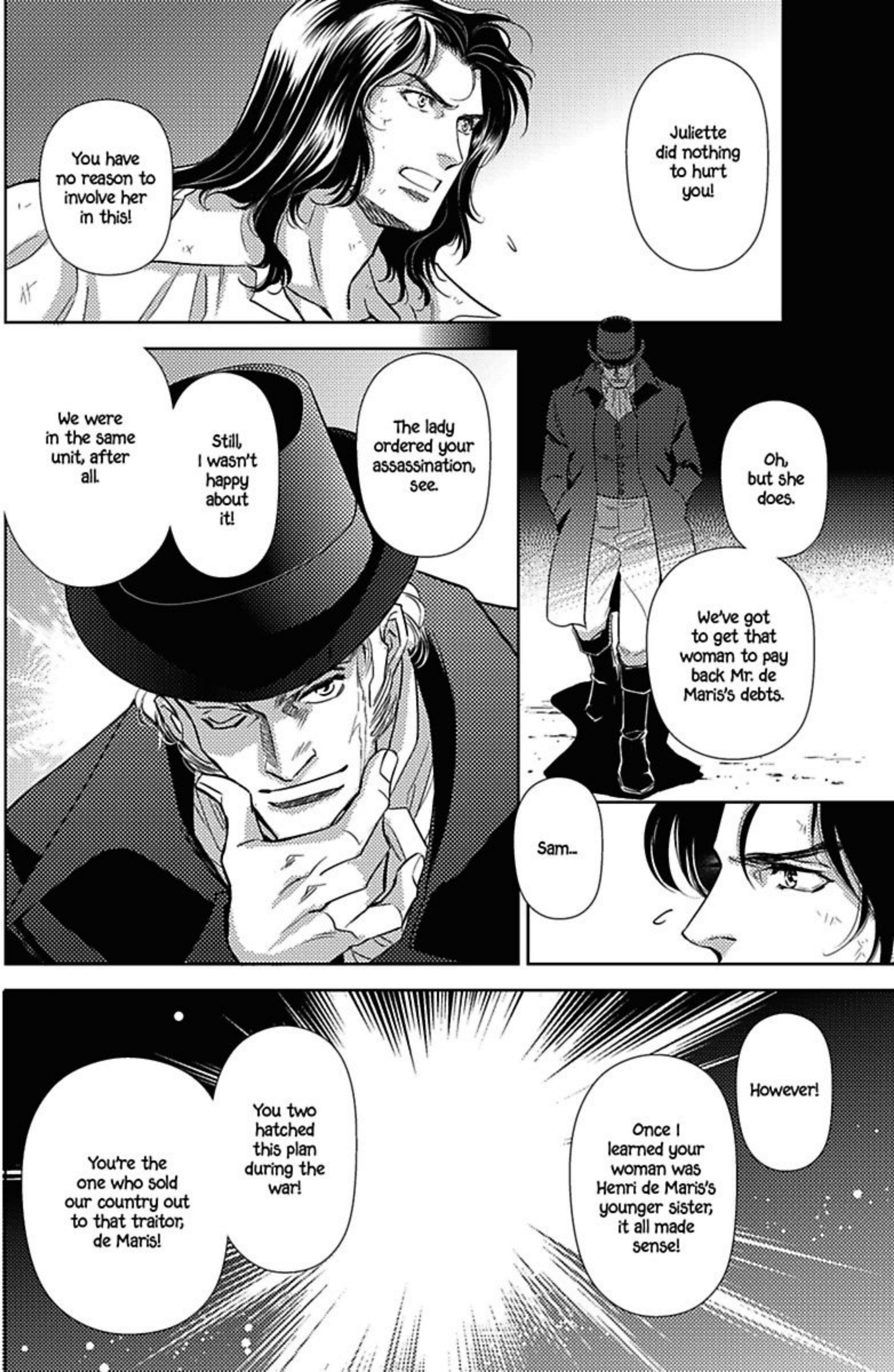
Mademoiselle,

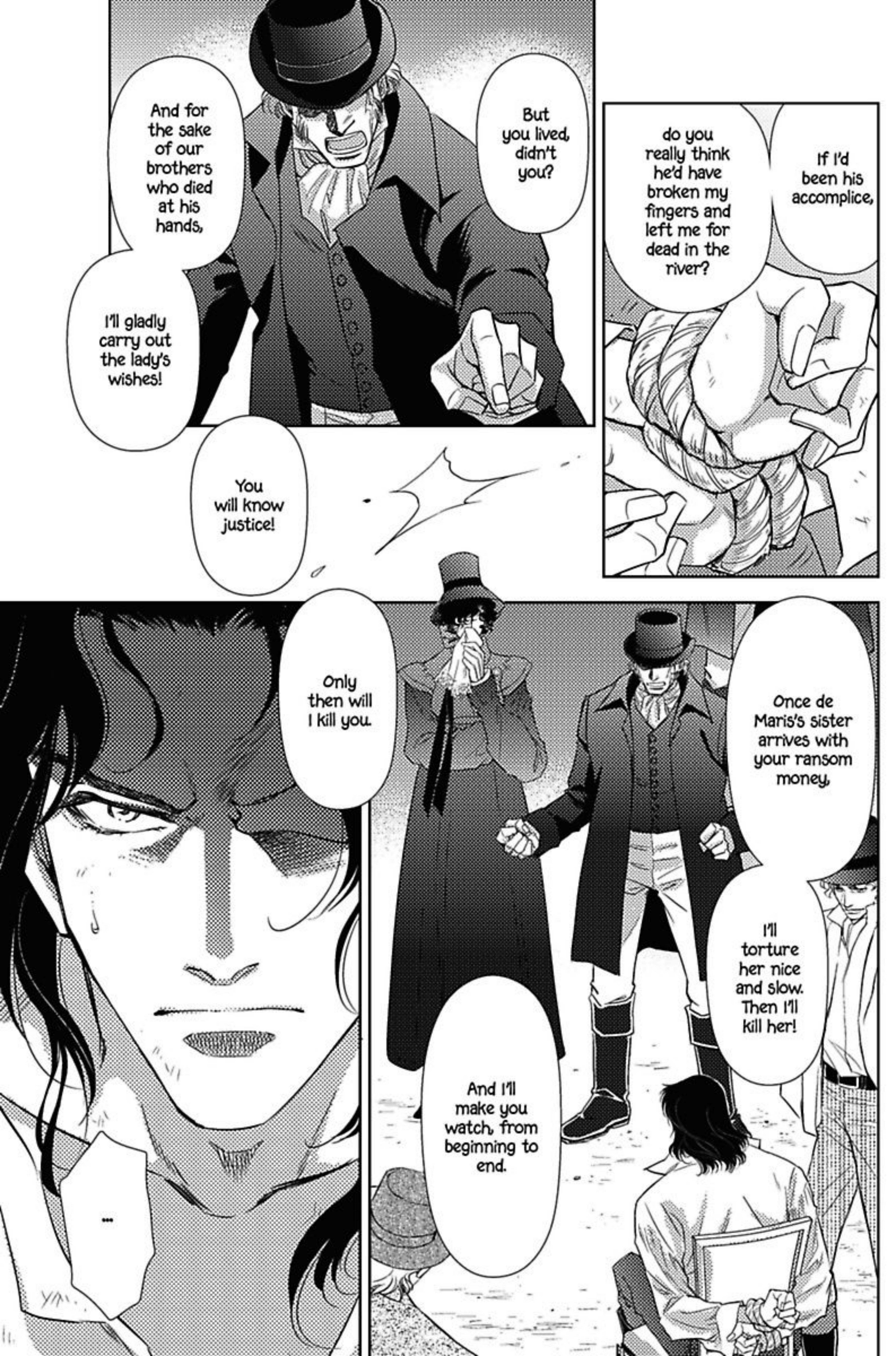
If you ever want to see your lover again, bring the necklace you wore to the theater that night to Clink Street.

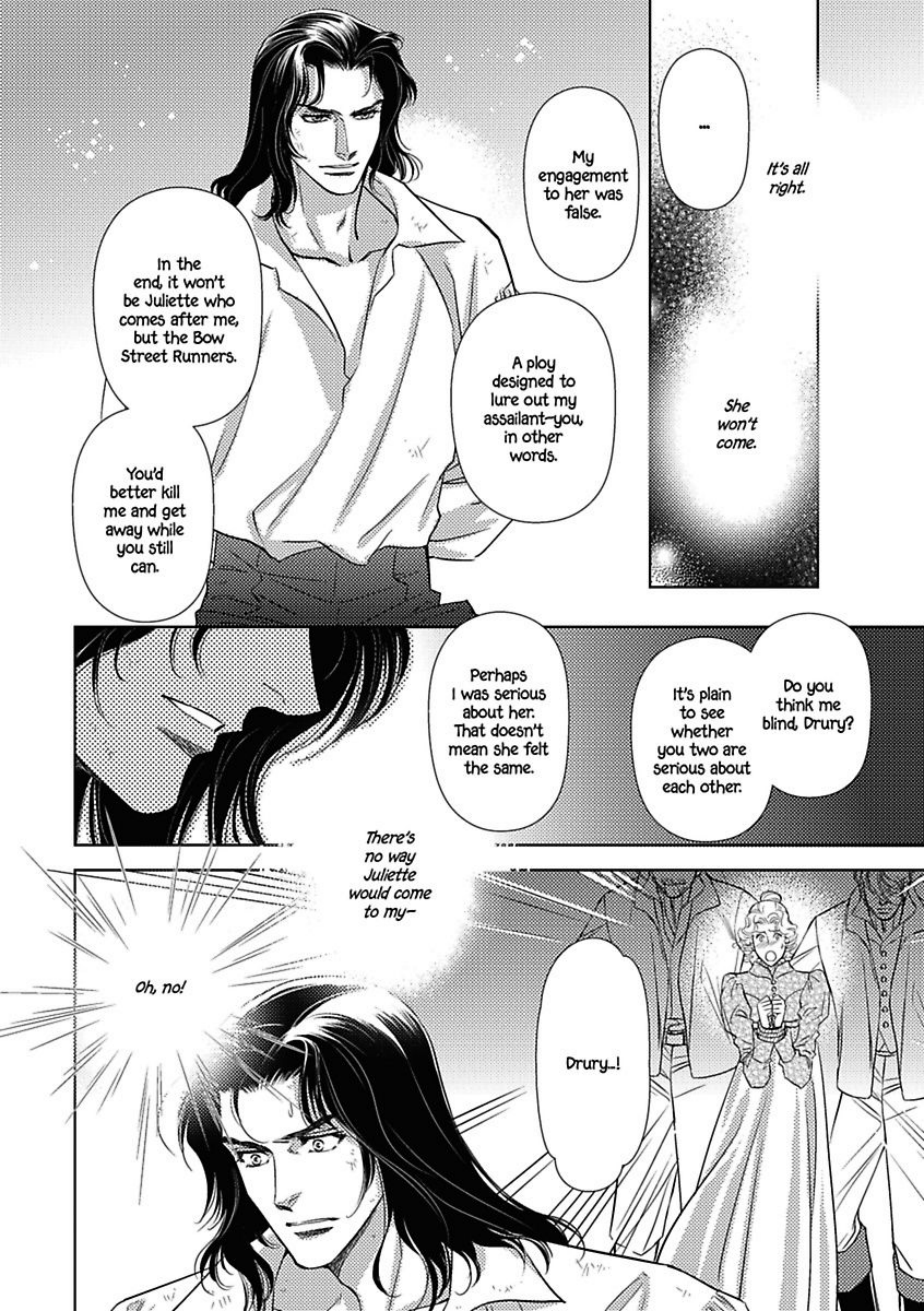
If you inform the police, or you're not alone, Drury will die.

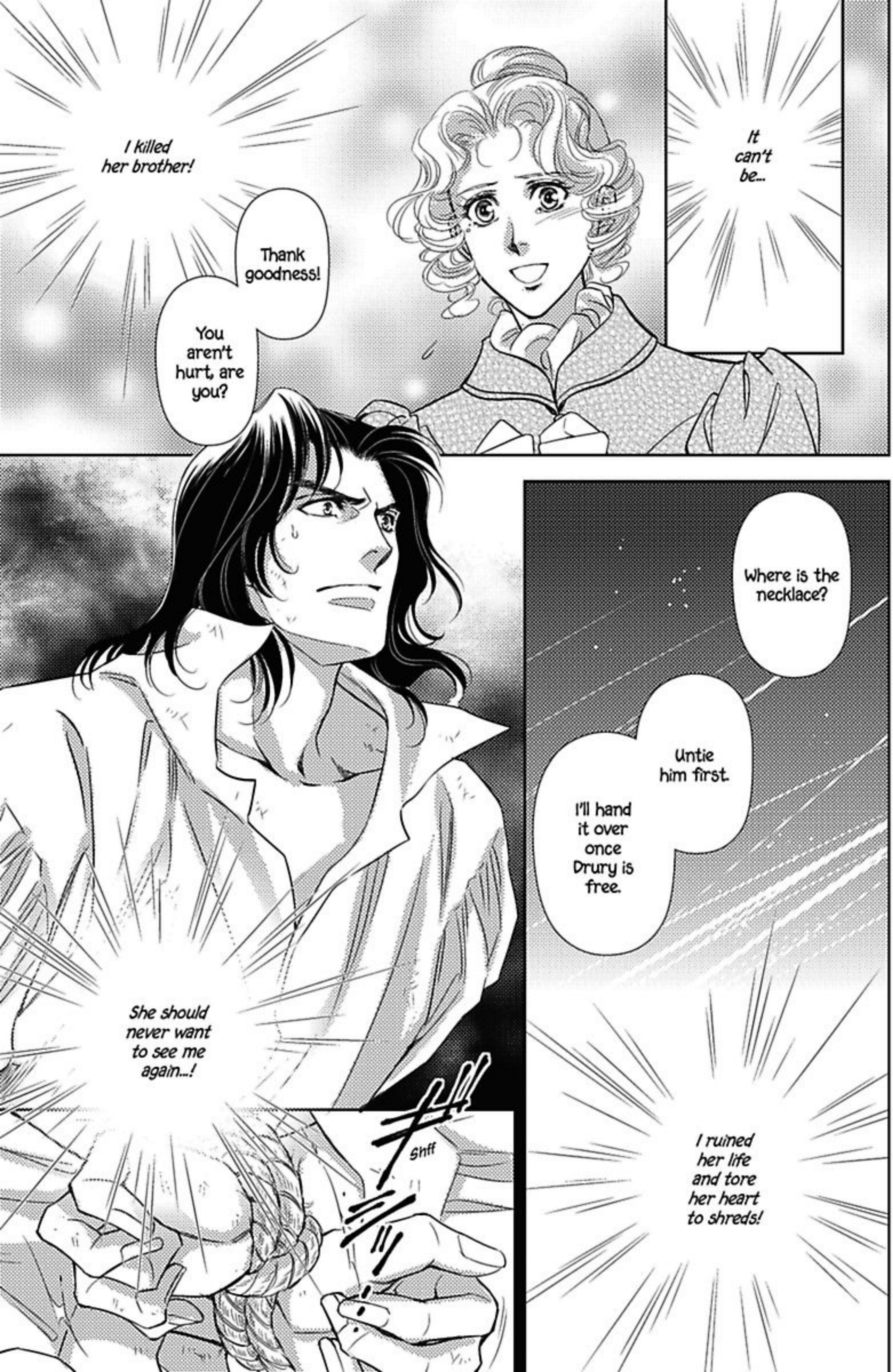

Drury...!
Are you awake, Sir Douglas?
...
Sarah...
So, it was you...
I'm so happy to see you again.
How does it feel to despair? To have your freedom stolen from you?
I thought we were in agreement that our relationship was a mere fling?

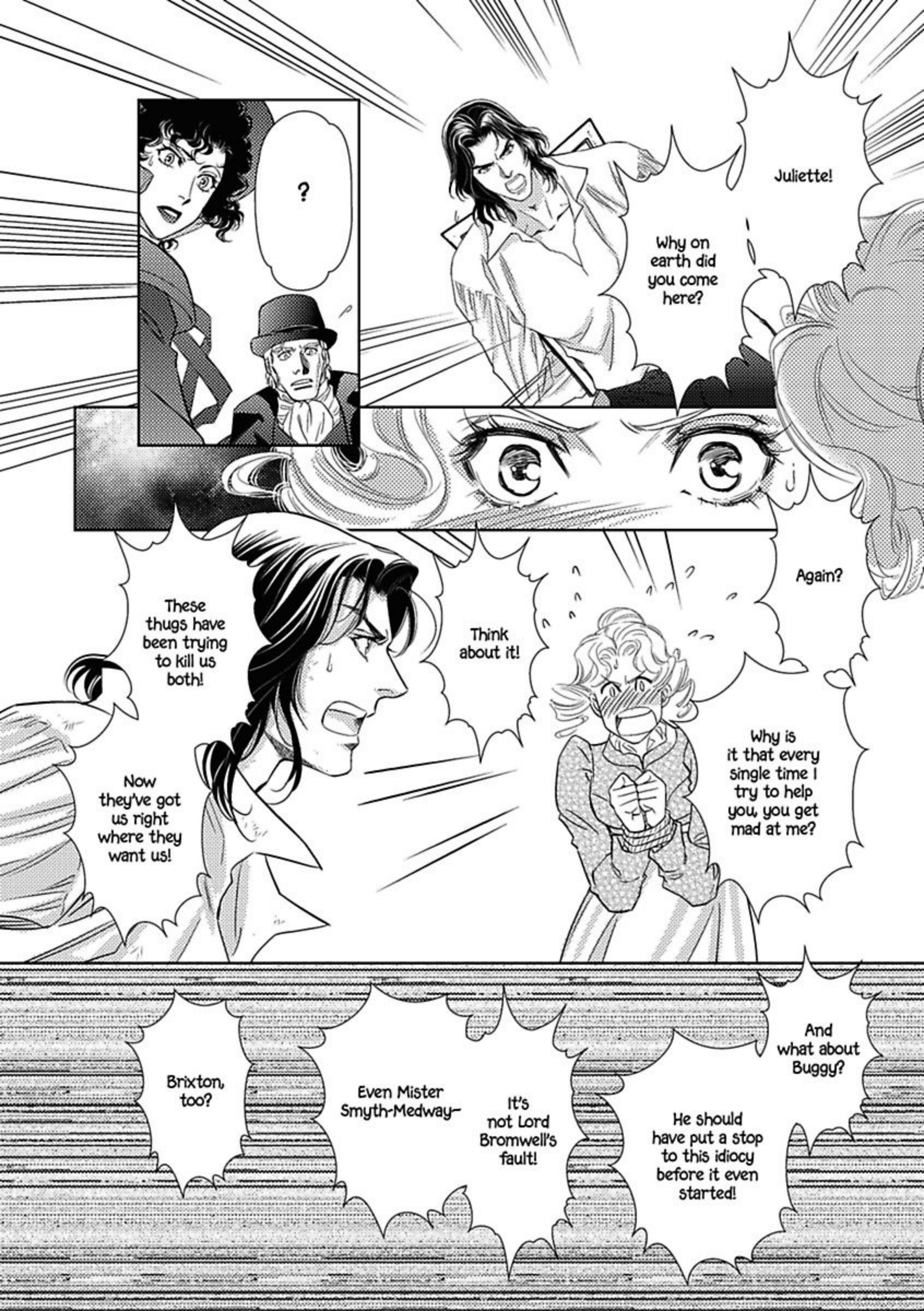

I thought he was indifferent to my affairs.
We were.
My husband, however, was not.
But when he found out you were my partner, he unleashed his wrath!
...
It's your fault,
You, too, will feel the suffering I feel knowing I'm to spend the rest of my life with my devil of a husband!
Sir Douglas!
I'll make you pay for my disgrace!
You...
...and your little French harlot, too!

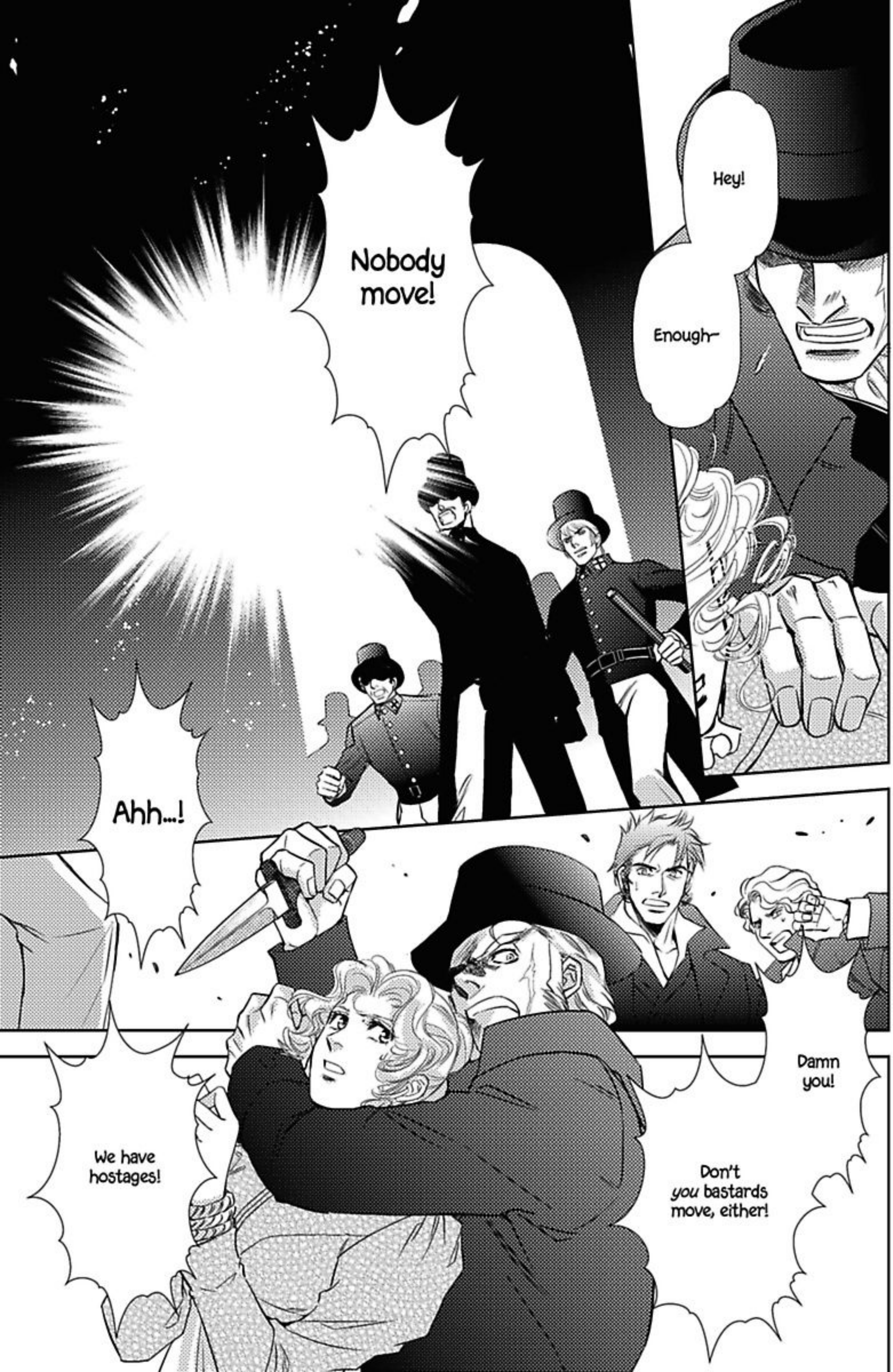

Juliette did nothing to hurt you!
You have no reason to involve her in this!
Oh, but she does.
We've got to get that woman to pay back Mr. de Maris's debts.
The lady ordered your assassination, see.
Still, I wasn't happy about it!
We were in the same unit, after all.
Sam...
However!
Once I learned your woman was Henri de Maris's younger sister, it all made sense!
You two hatched this plan during the war!
You're the one who sold our country out to that traitor, de Maris!

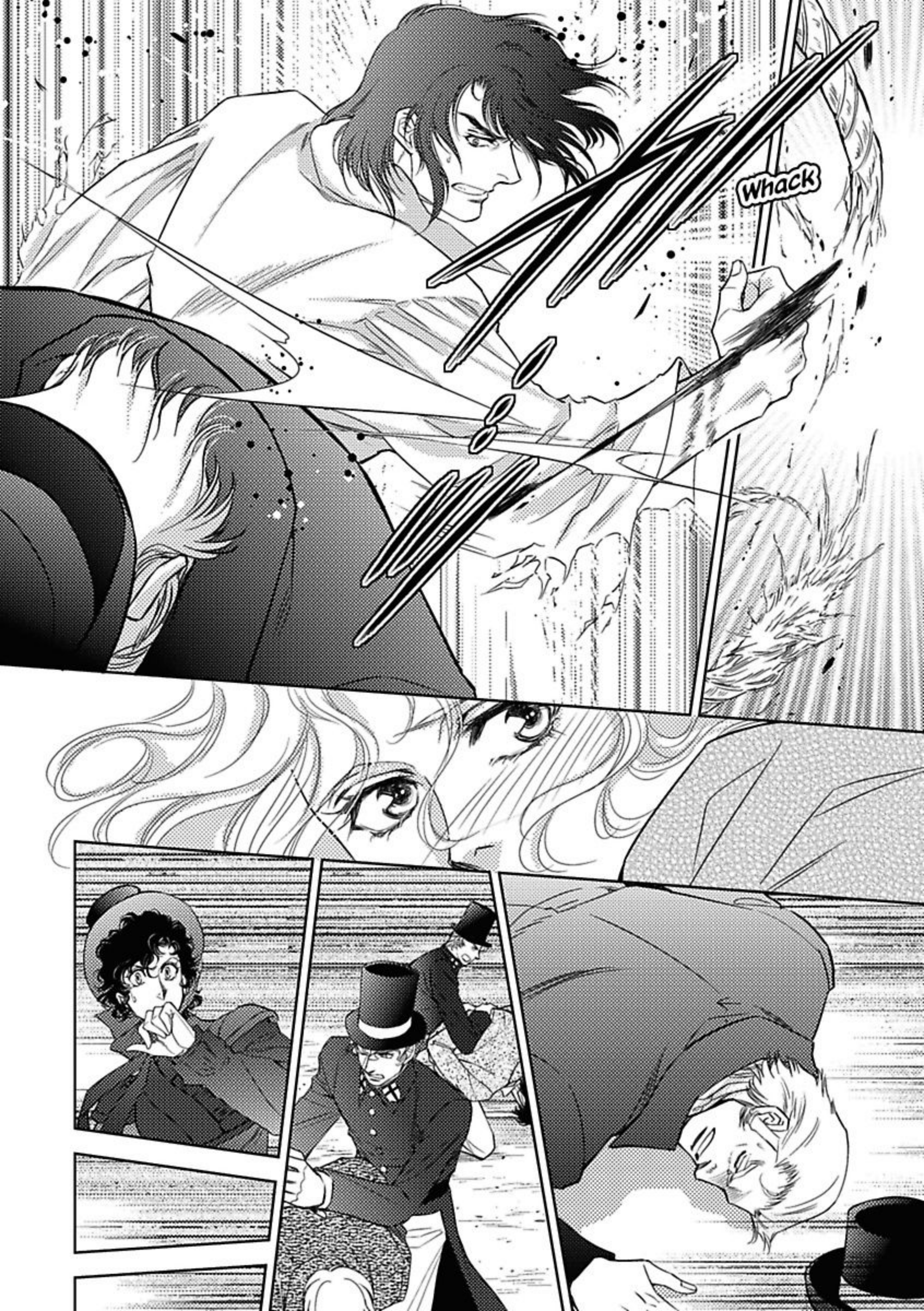

If I'd been his accomplice,
do you really think he'd have broken my fingers and left me for dead in the river?
But you lived, didn't you?
And for the sake of our brothers who died at his hands,
I'll gladly carry out the lady's wishes!
You will know justice!
Once de Maris's sister arrives with your ransom money,
I'll torture her nice and slow. Then I'll kill her!
And I'll make you watch, from beginning to end.
Only then will I kill you.
...

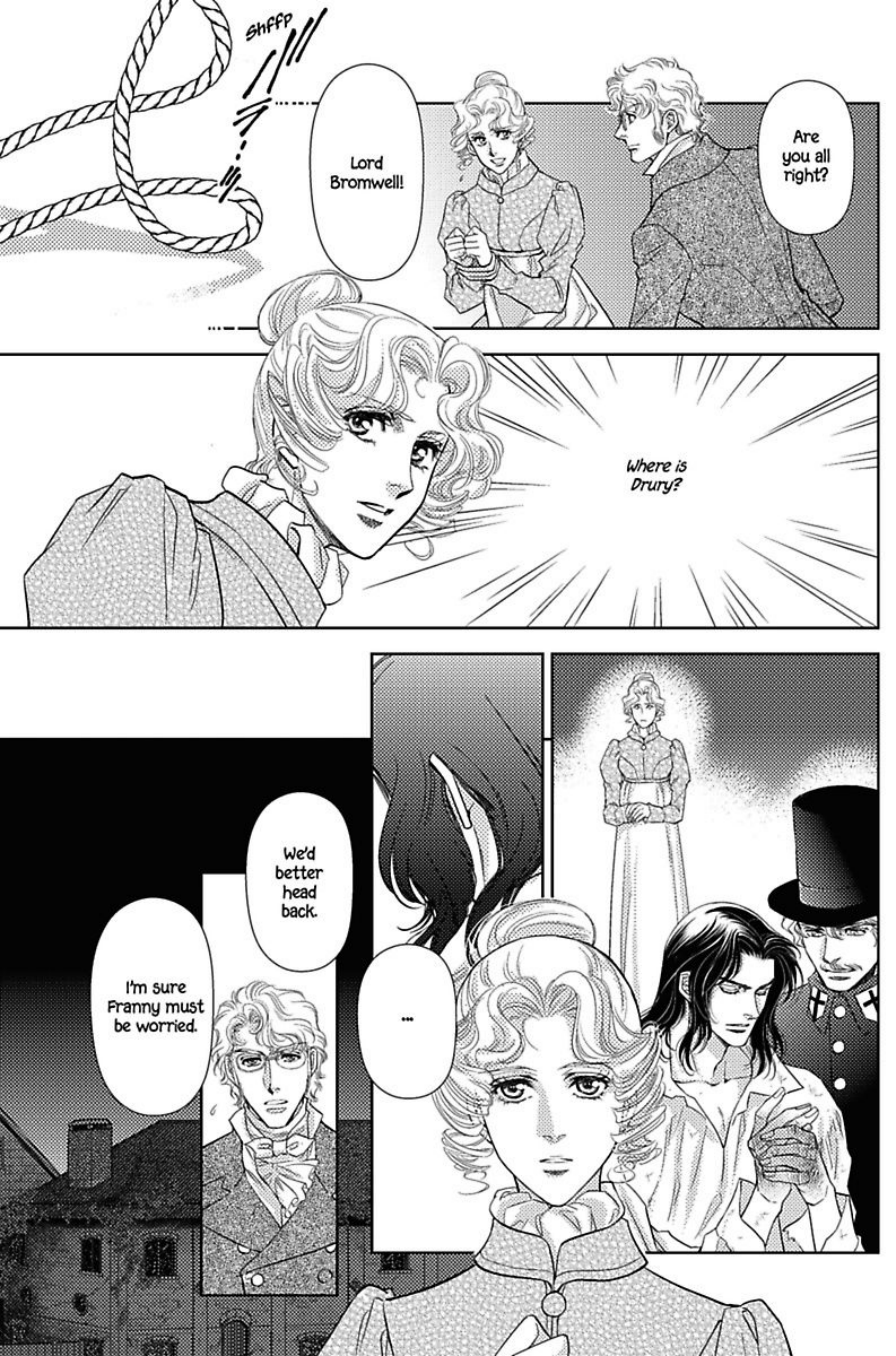

...
It's all right.
She won't come.
My engagement to her was false.
A ploy designed to lure out my assailant—you, in other words.
In the end, it won't be Juliette who comes after me, but the Bow Street Runners.
You'd better kill me and get away while you still can.
Do you think me blind, Drury?
It's plain to see whether you two are serious about each other.
Perhaps I was serious about her. That doesn't mean she felt the same.
There's no way Juliette would come to my—
Oh, no!
Drury...!

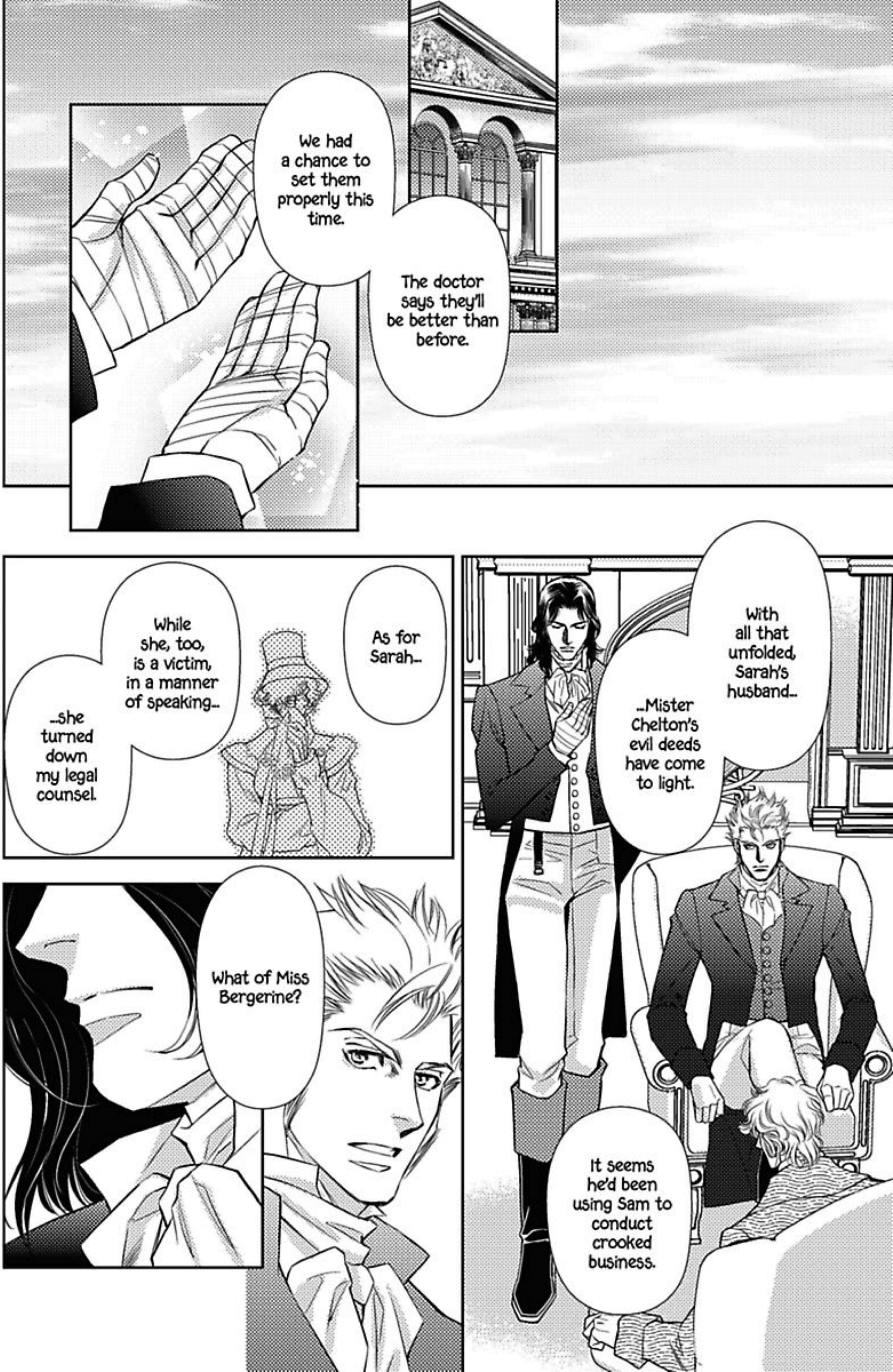

It can't be...
Thank goodness!
You aren't hurt, are you?
I killed her brother!
Where is the necklace?
Untie him first.
I'll hand it over once Drury is free.
I ruined her life and tore her heart to shreds!
She should never want to see me again...!
Shff

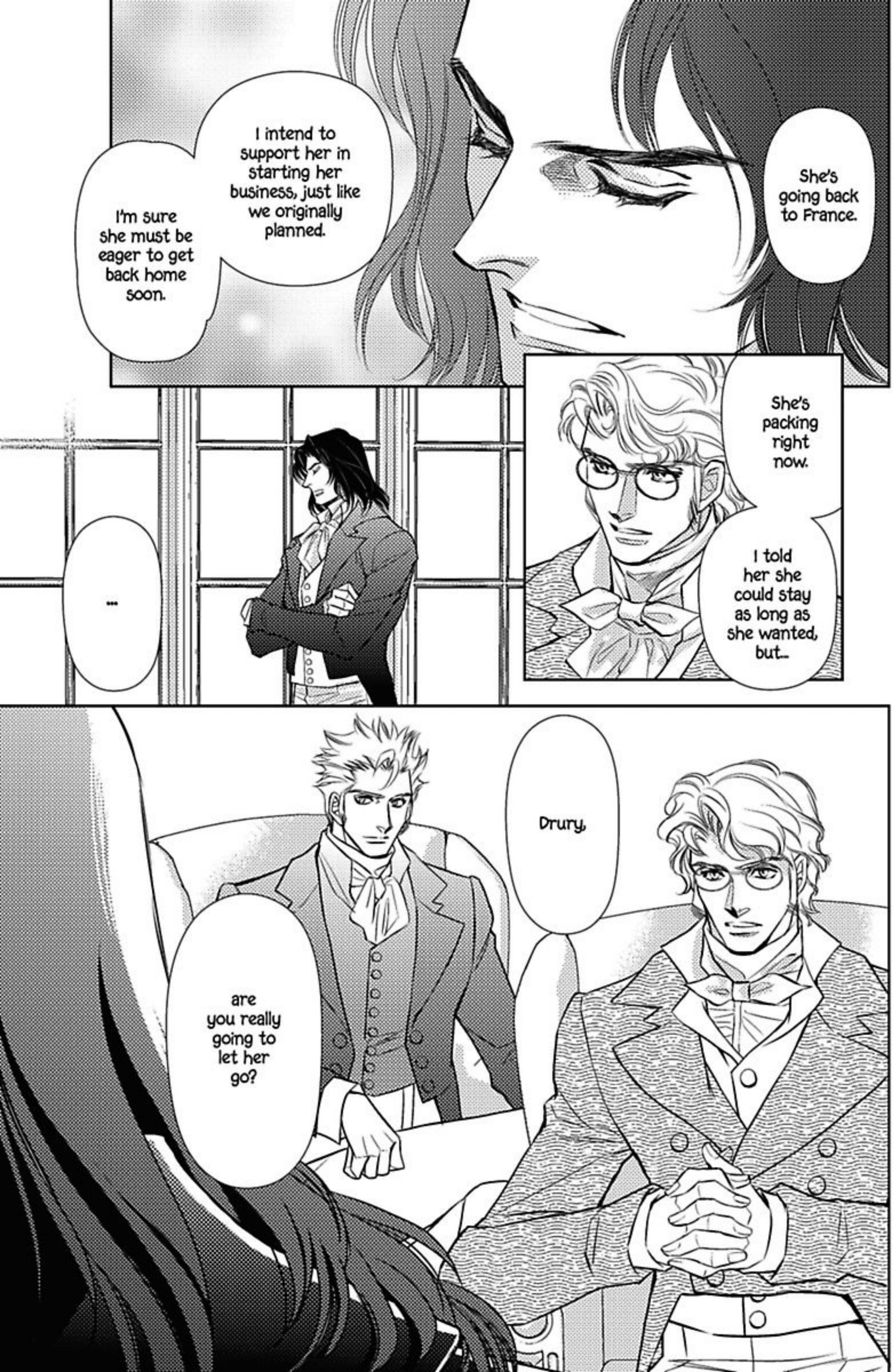

Juliette!
Why on earth did you come here?
?
Again?
Why is it that every single time I try to help you, you get mad at me?
Think about it!
These thugs have been trying to kill us both!
Now they've got us right where they want us!
And what about Buggy?
He should have put a stop to this idiocy before it even started!
It's not Lord Bromwell's fault!
Even Mister Smyth-Medway—
Brixton, too?

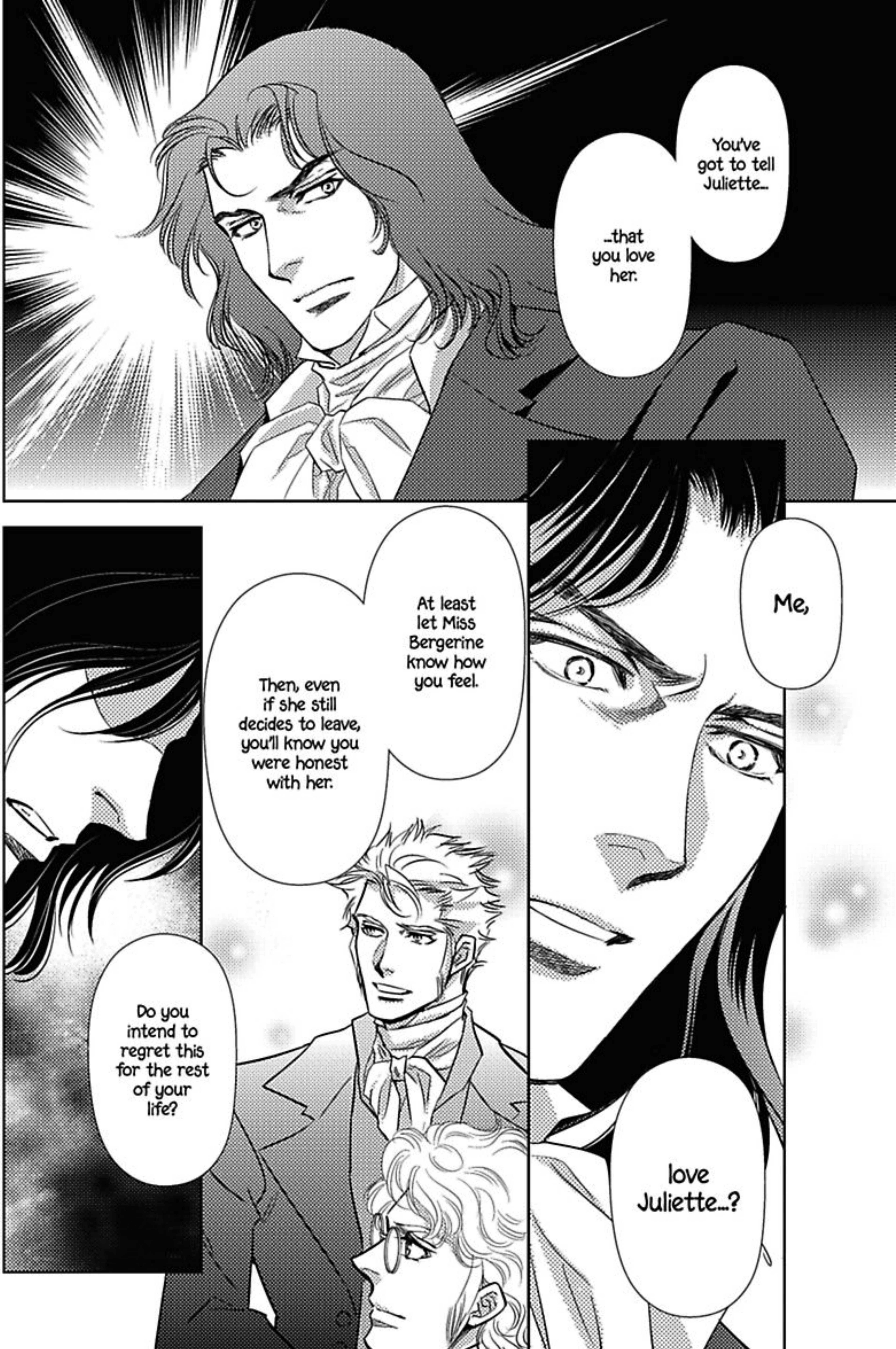

Hey!
Enough~
Nobody move!
Ahh...!
Damn you!
Don't *you* bastards move, either!
We have hostages!

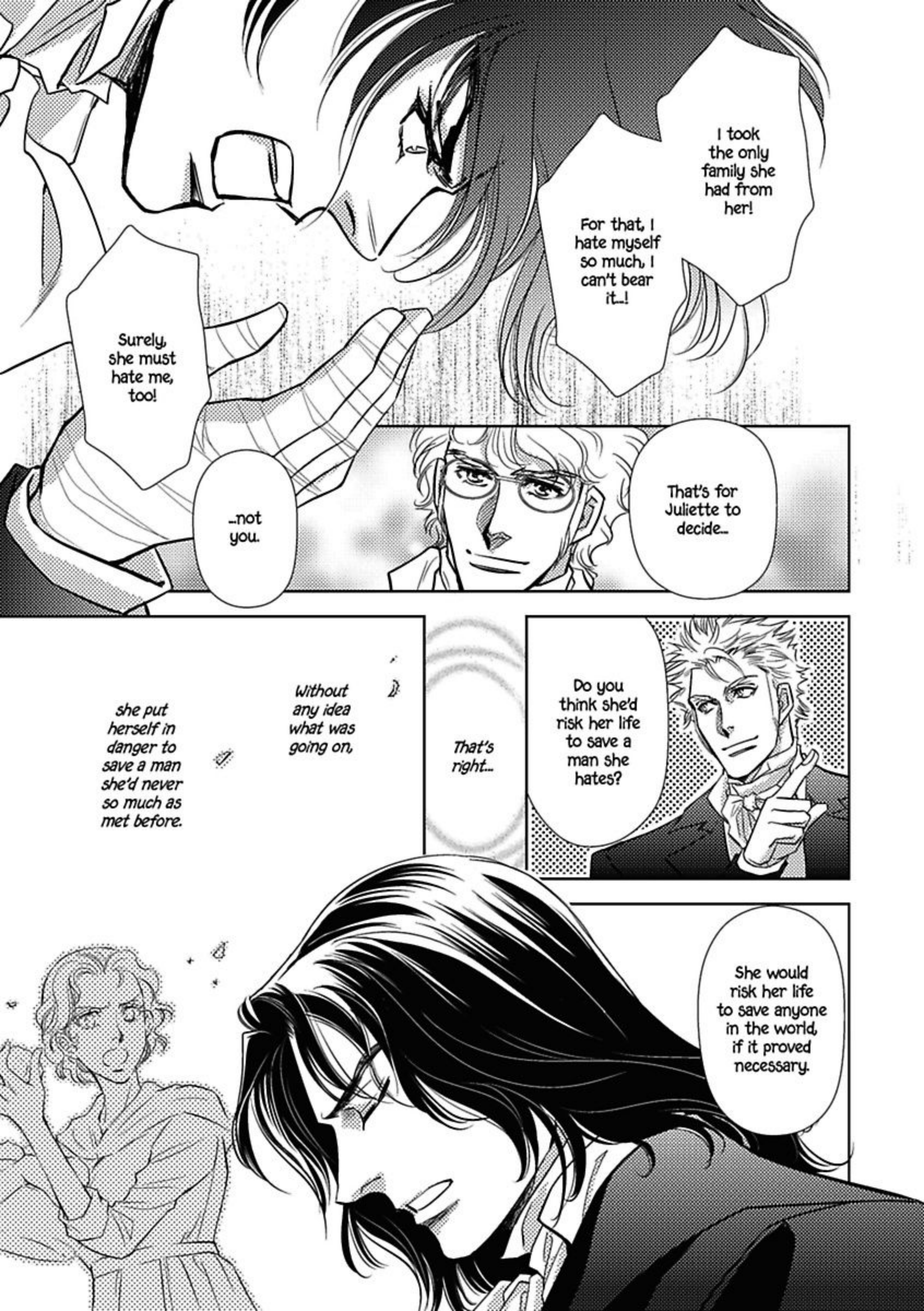

Whack

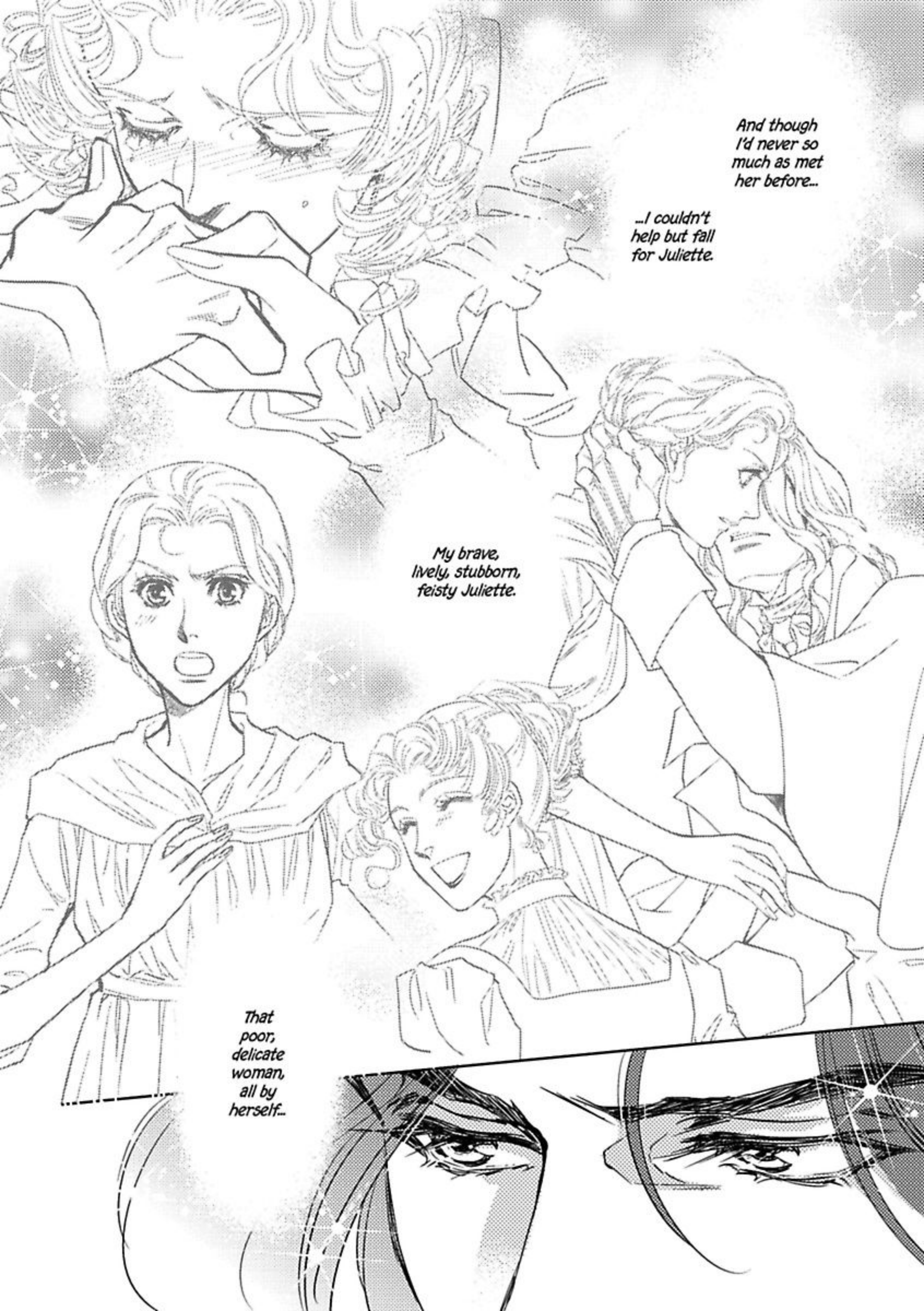

Are you all right?
Lord Bromwell!
Shffp
Where is Drury?
...
We'd better head back.
I'm sure Franny must be worried.

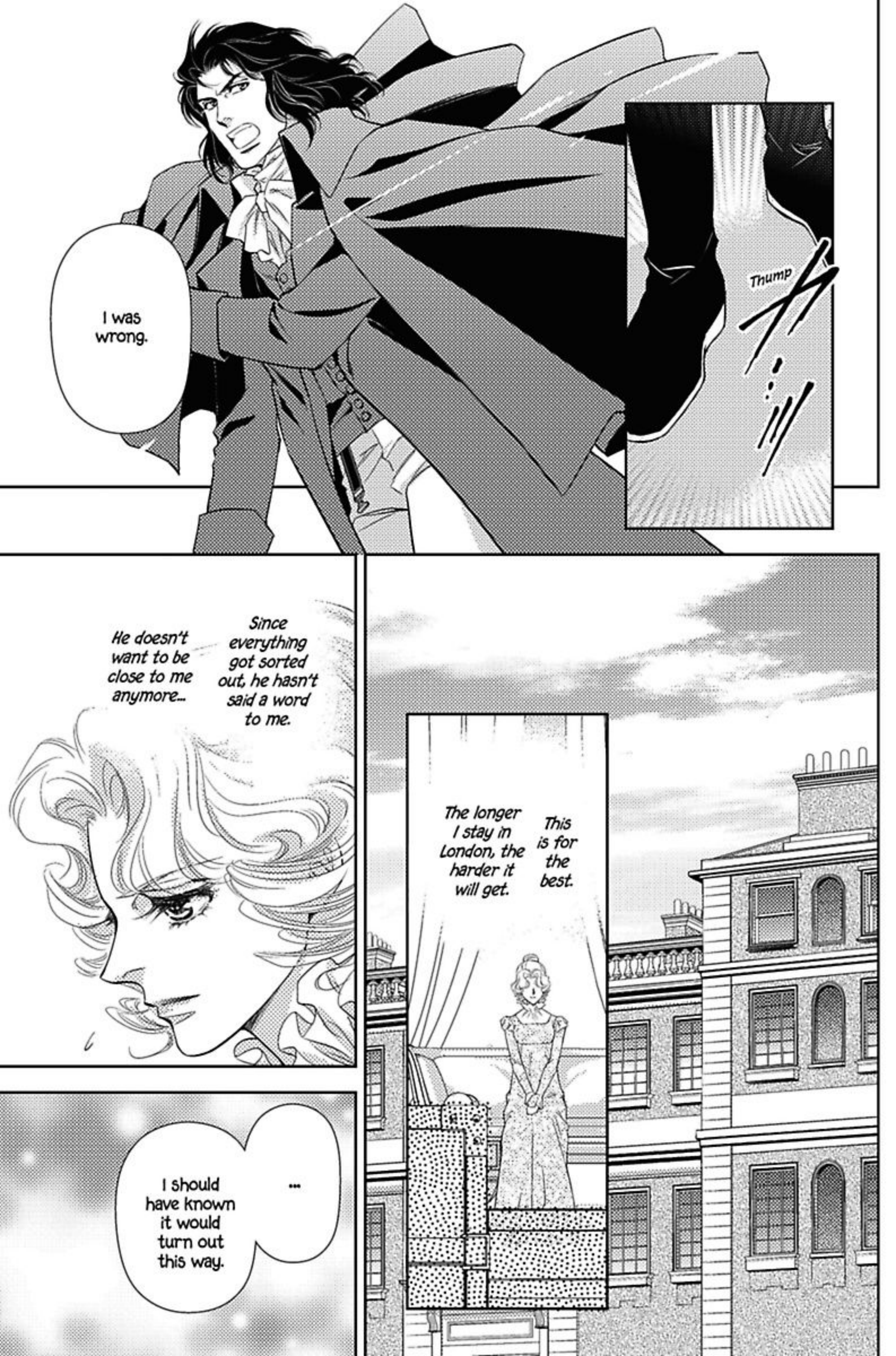

We had a chance to set them properly this time.
The doctor says they'll be better than before.
With all that unfolded, Sarah's husband...
...Mister Chelton's evil deeds have come to light.
It seems he'd been using Sam to conduct crooked business.
As for Sarah...
While she, too, is a victim, in a manner of speaking...
...she turned down my legal counsel.
What of Miss Bergerine?

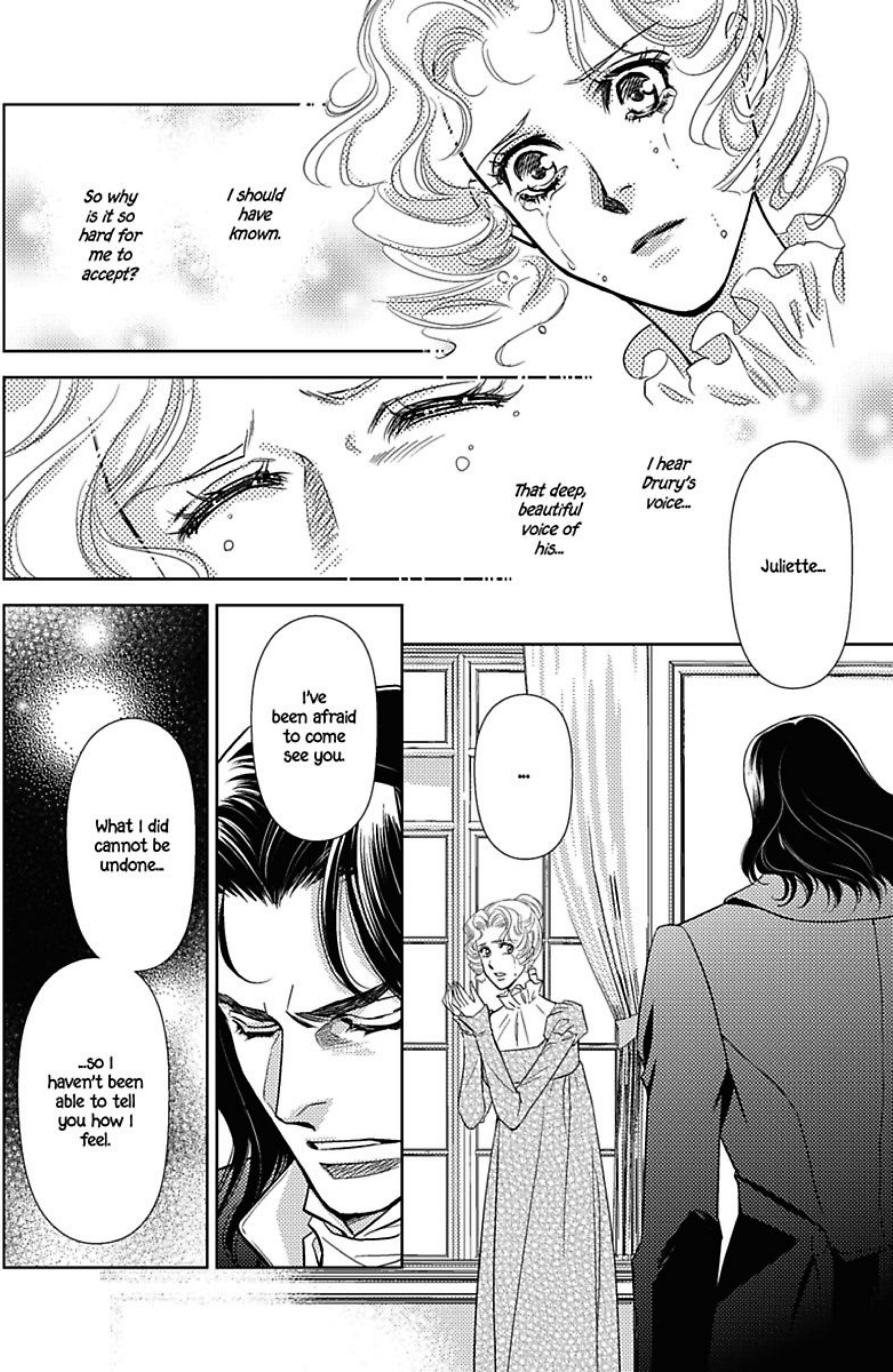

She's going back to France.
I intend to support her in starting her business, just like we originally planned.
I'm sure she must be eager to get back home soon.
She's packing right now.
I told her she could stay as long as she wanted, but...
...
Drury,
are you really going to let her go?

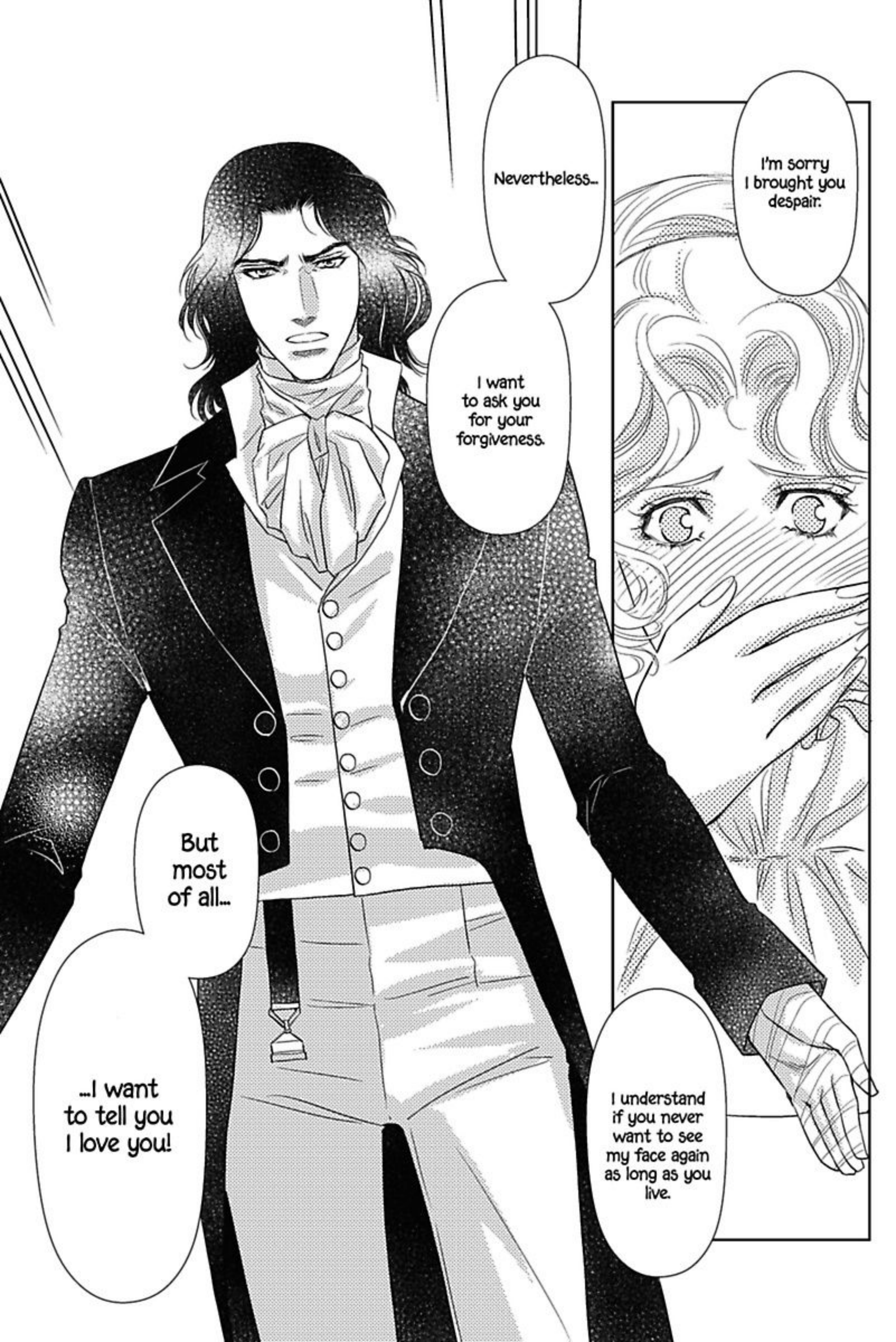

You've got to tell Juliette...
...that you love her.
Me,
love Juliette...?
At least let Miss Bergerine know how you feel.
Then, even if she still decides to leave, you'll know you were honest with her.
Do you intend to regret this for the rest of your life?

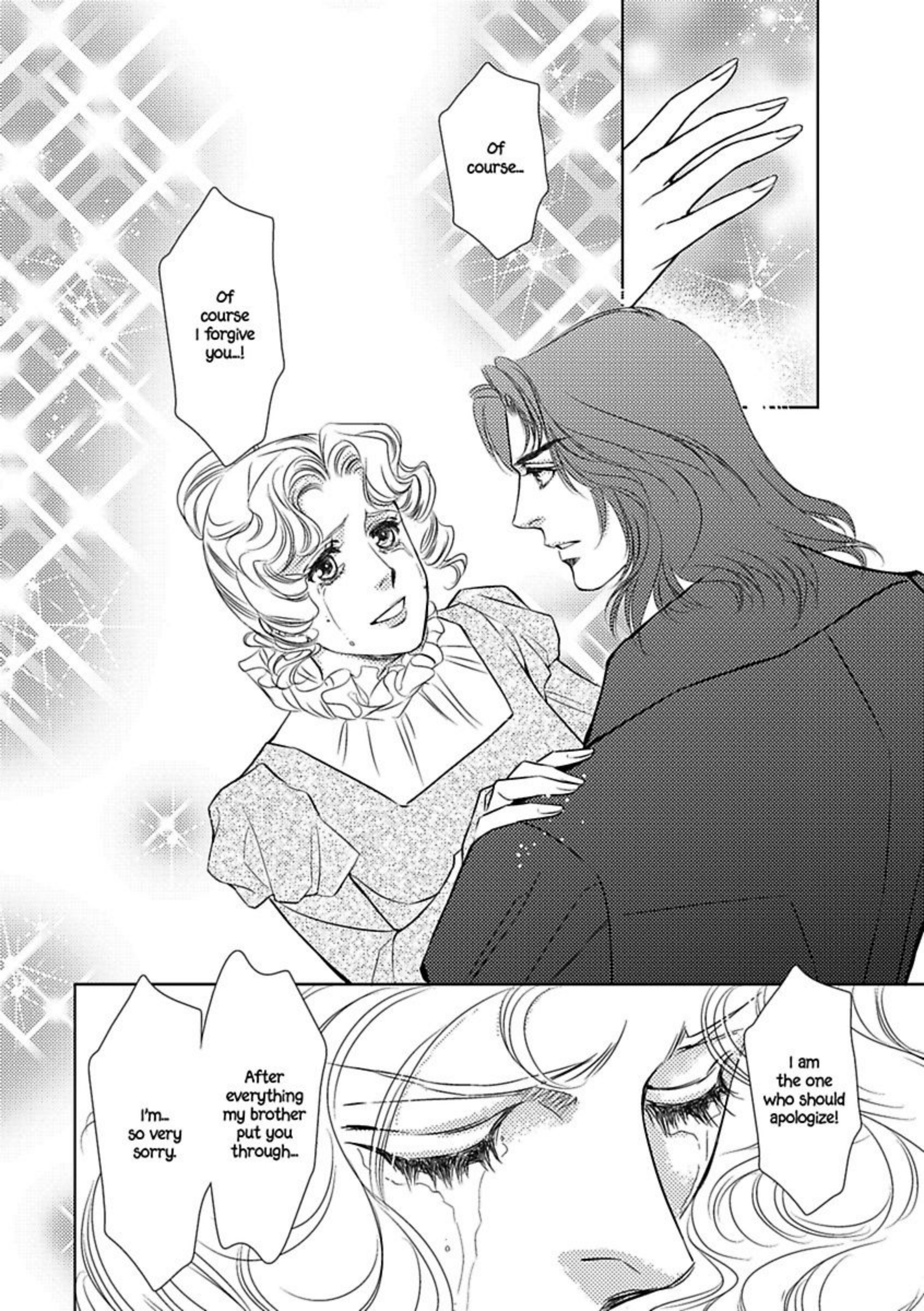

I took the only family she had from her!
For that, I hate myself so much, I can't bear it...!
Surely, she must hate me, too!
That's for Juliette to decide...
...not you.
Do you think she'd risk her life to save a man she hates?
That's right...
Without any idea what was going on,
she put herself in danger to save a man she'd never so much as met before.
She would risk her life to save anyone in the world, if it proved necessary.

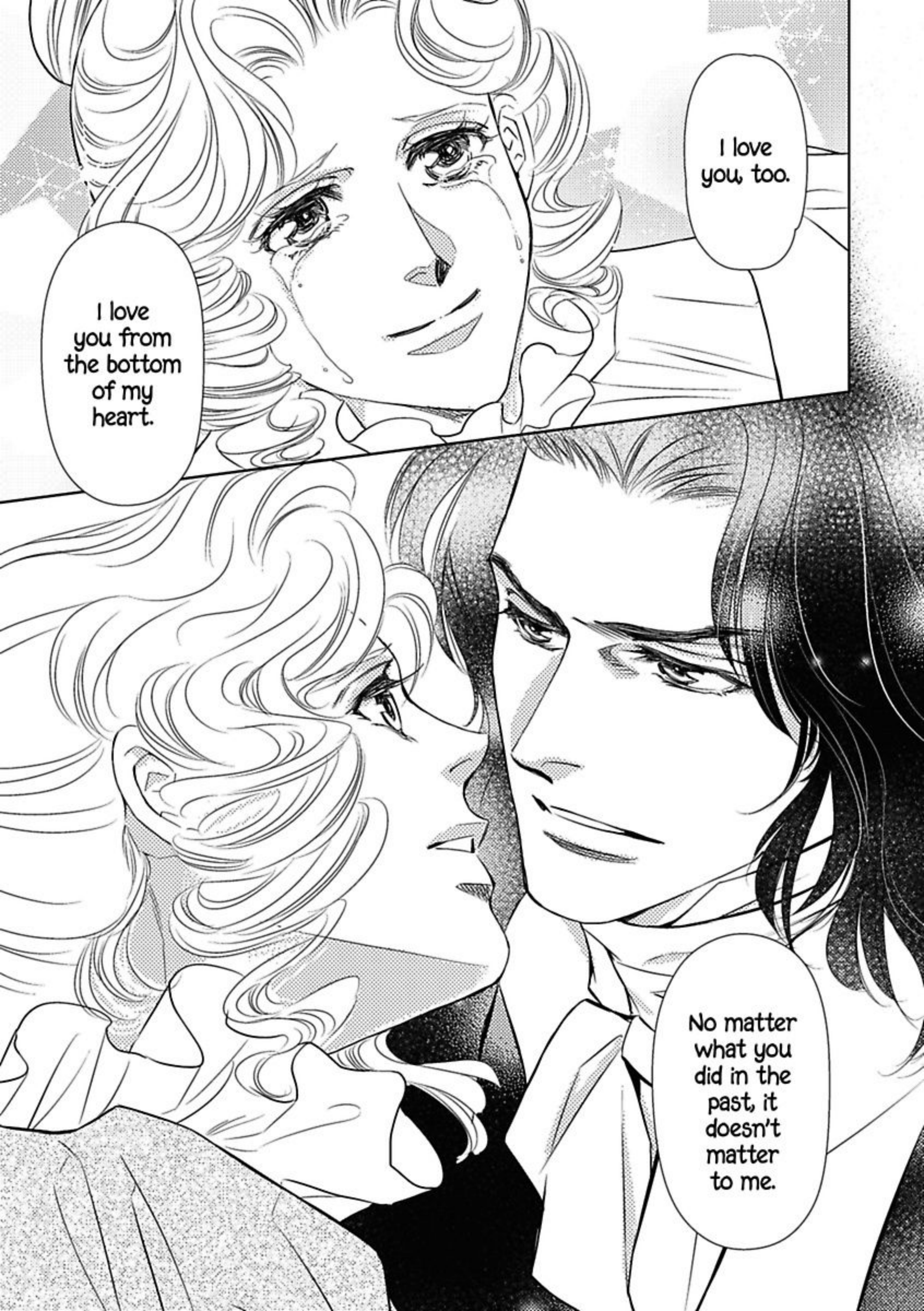

And though I'd never so much as met her before...
...I couldn't help but fall for Juliette.
My brave, lively, stubborn, feisty Juliette.
That poor, delicate woman, all by herself...

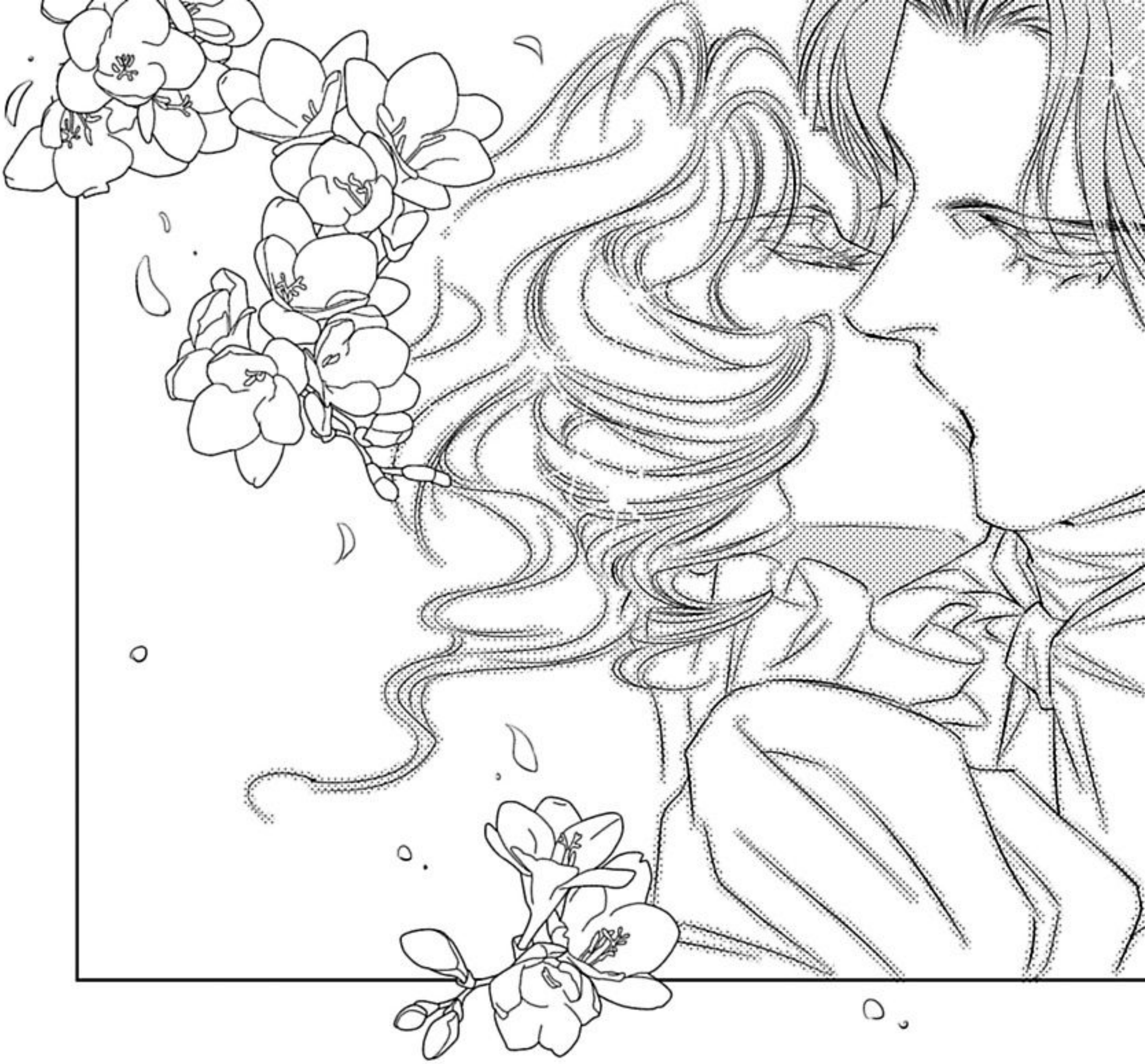

Thump
I was wrong.
This is for the best.
The longer I stay in London, the harder it will get.
Since everything got sorted out, he hasn't said a word to me.
He doesn't want to be close to me anymore...
...
I should have known it would turn out this way.

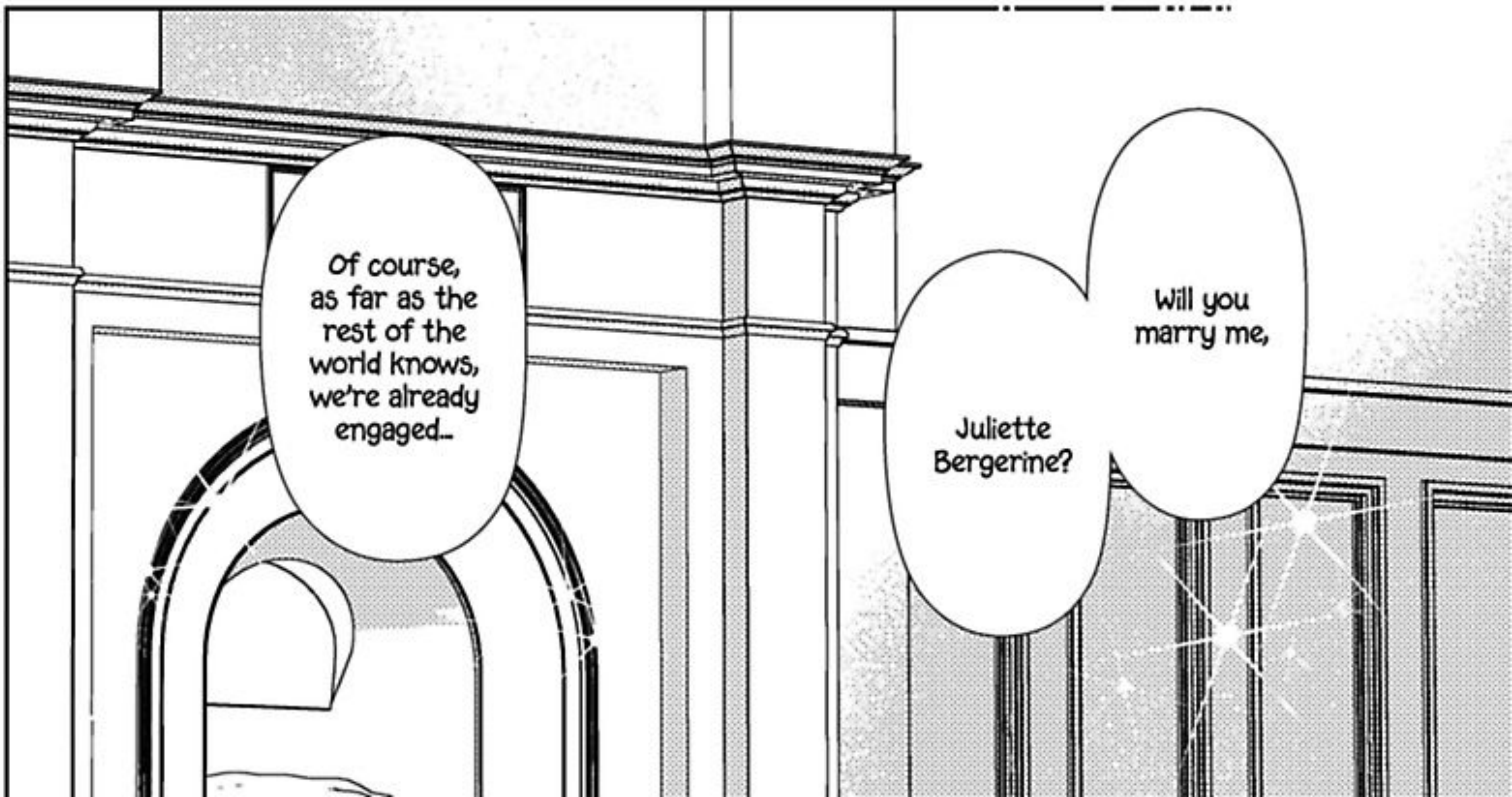

I should have known.
So why is it so hard for me to accept?
I hear Drury's voice...
That deep, beautiful voice of his...
Juliette...
...
I've been afraid to come see you.
What I did cannot be undone...
...so I haven't been able to tell you how I feel.

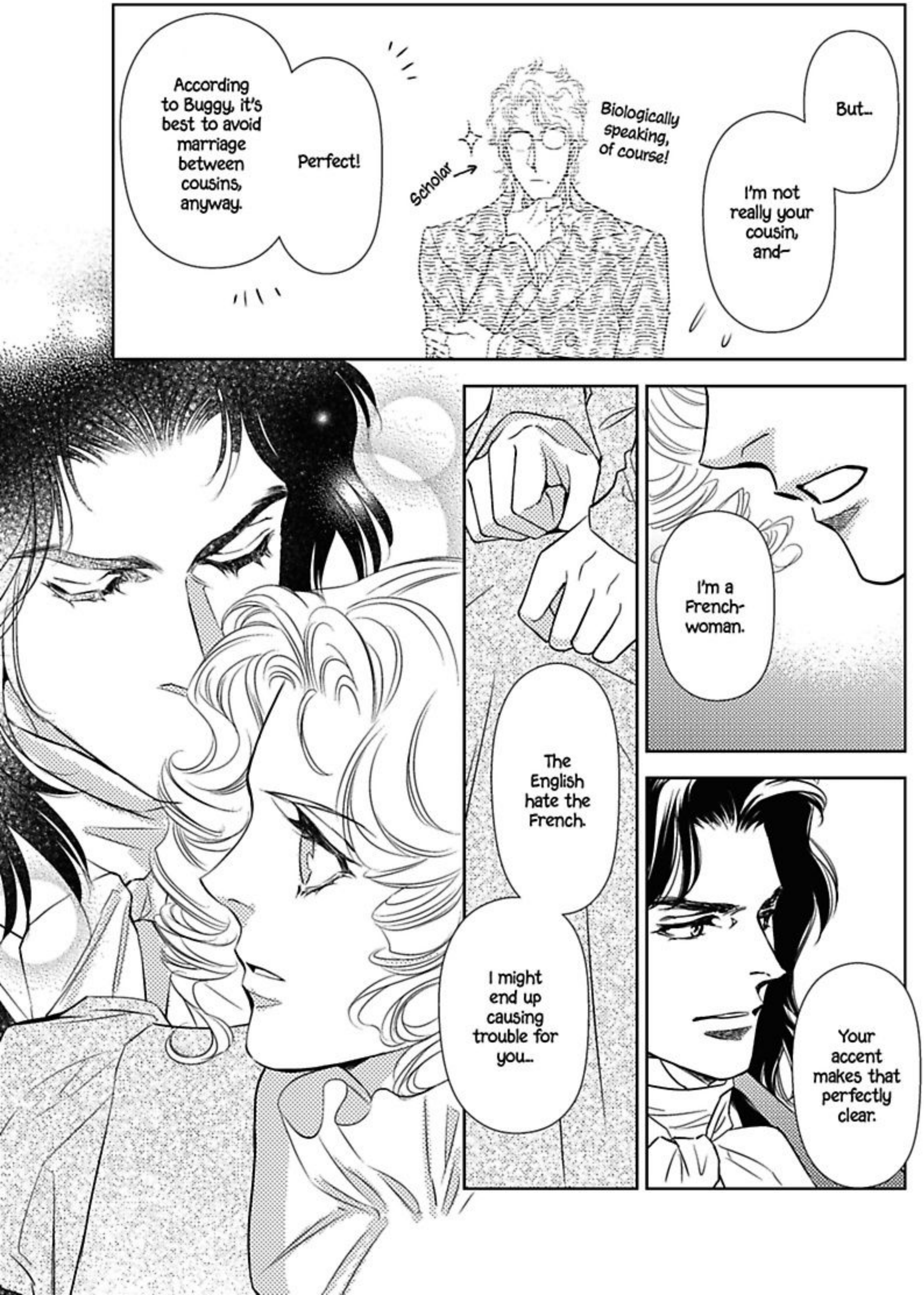

I'm sorry I brought you despair.
Nevertheless...
I want to ask you for your forgiveness.
I understand if you never want to see my face again as long as you live.
But most of all...
...I want to tell you I love you!

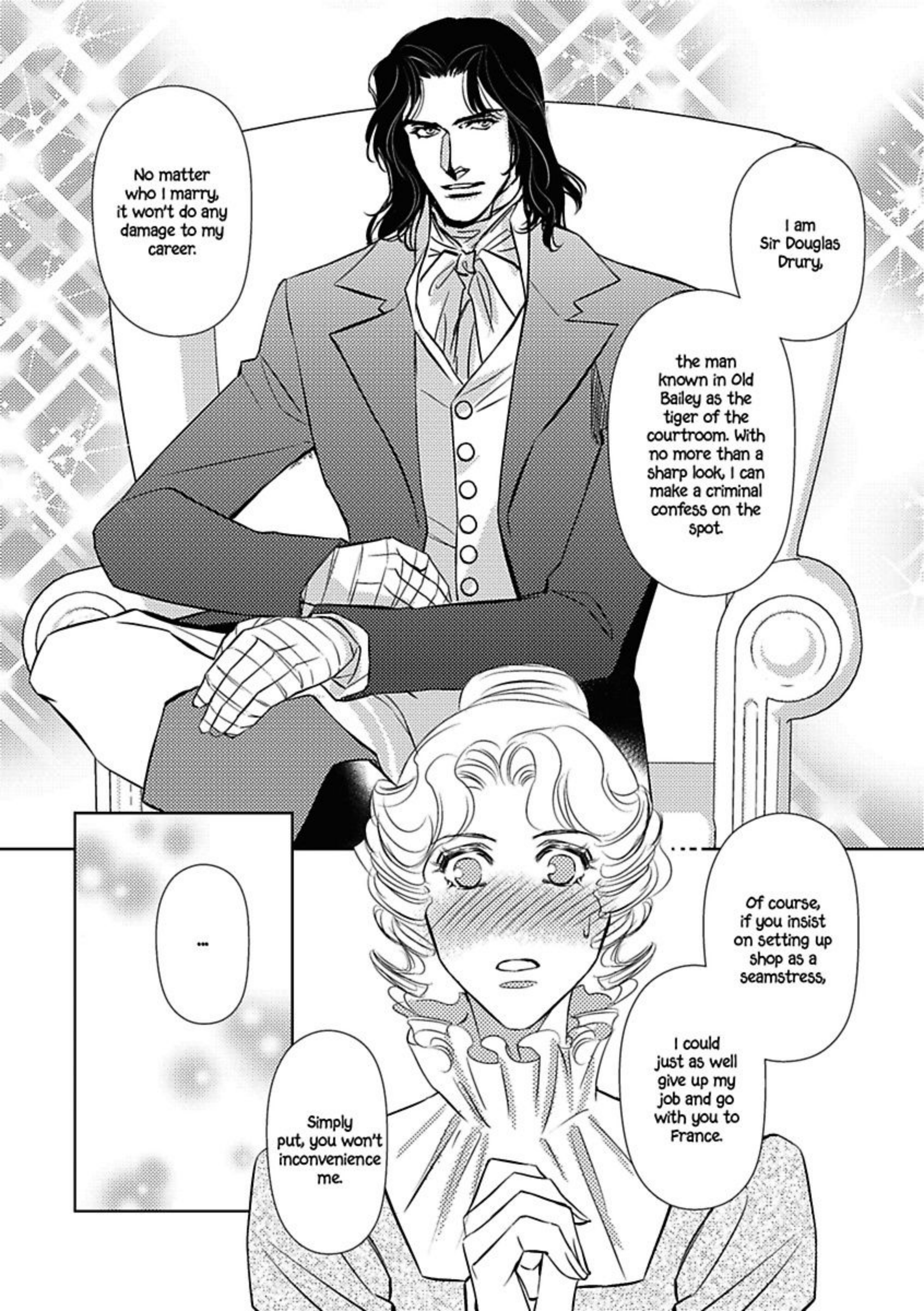

Of course...
Of course I forgive you...!
I am the one who should apologize!
After everything my brother put you through...
I'm... so very sorry.

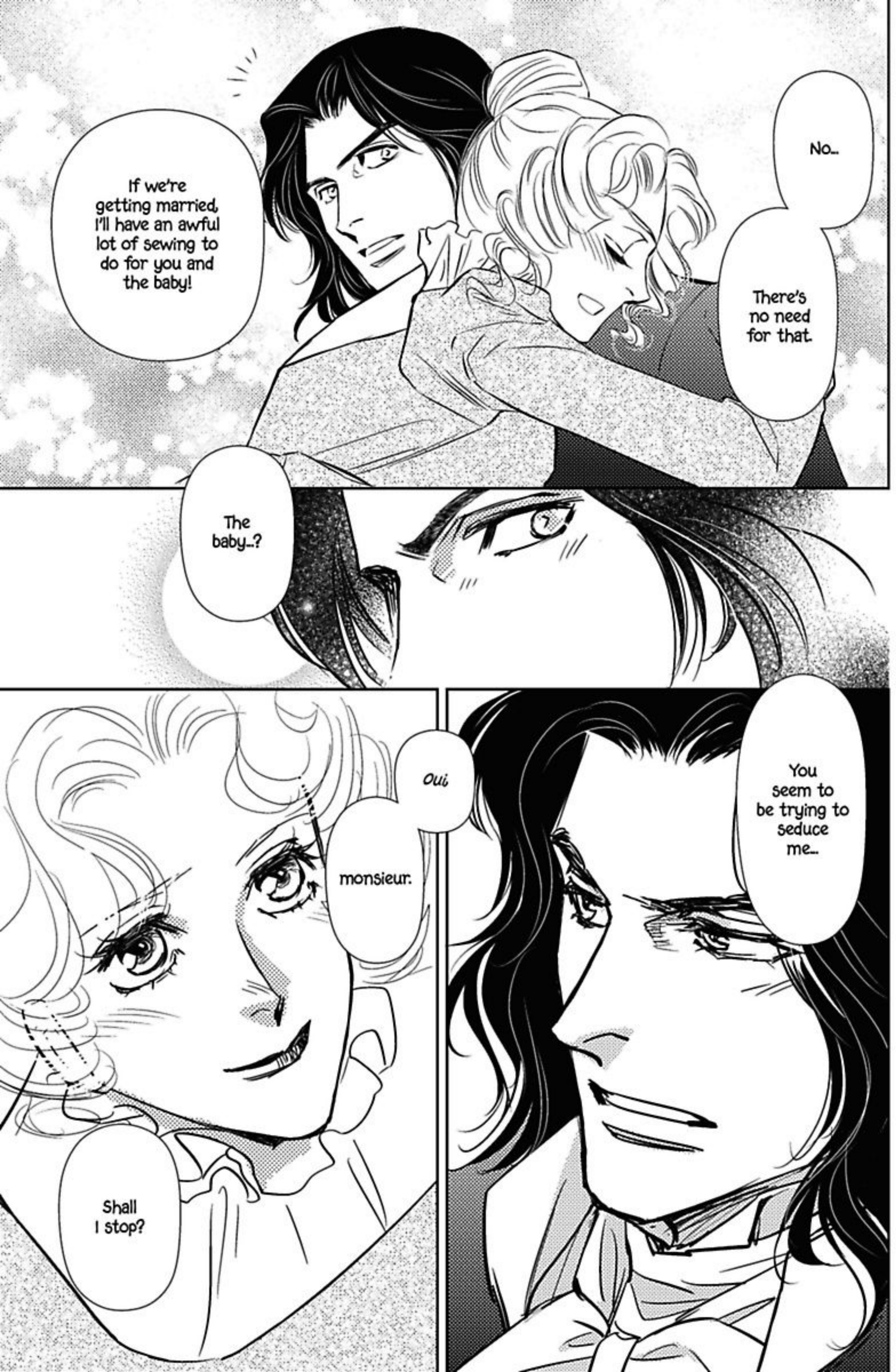

I love you, too.
I love you from the bottom of my heart.
No matter what you did in the past, it doesn't matter to me.

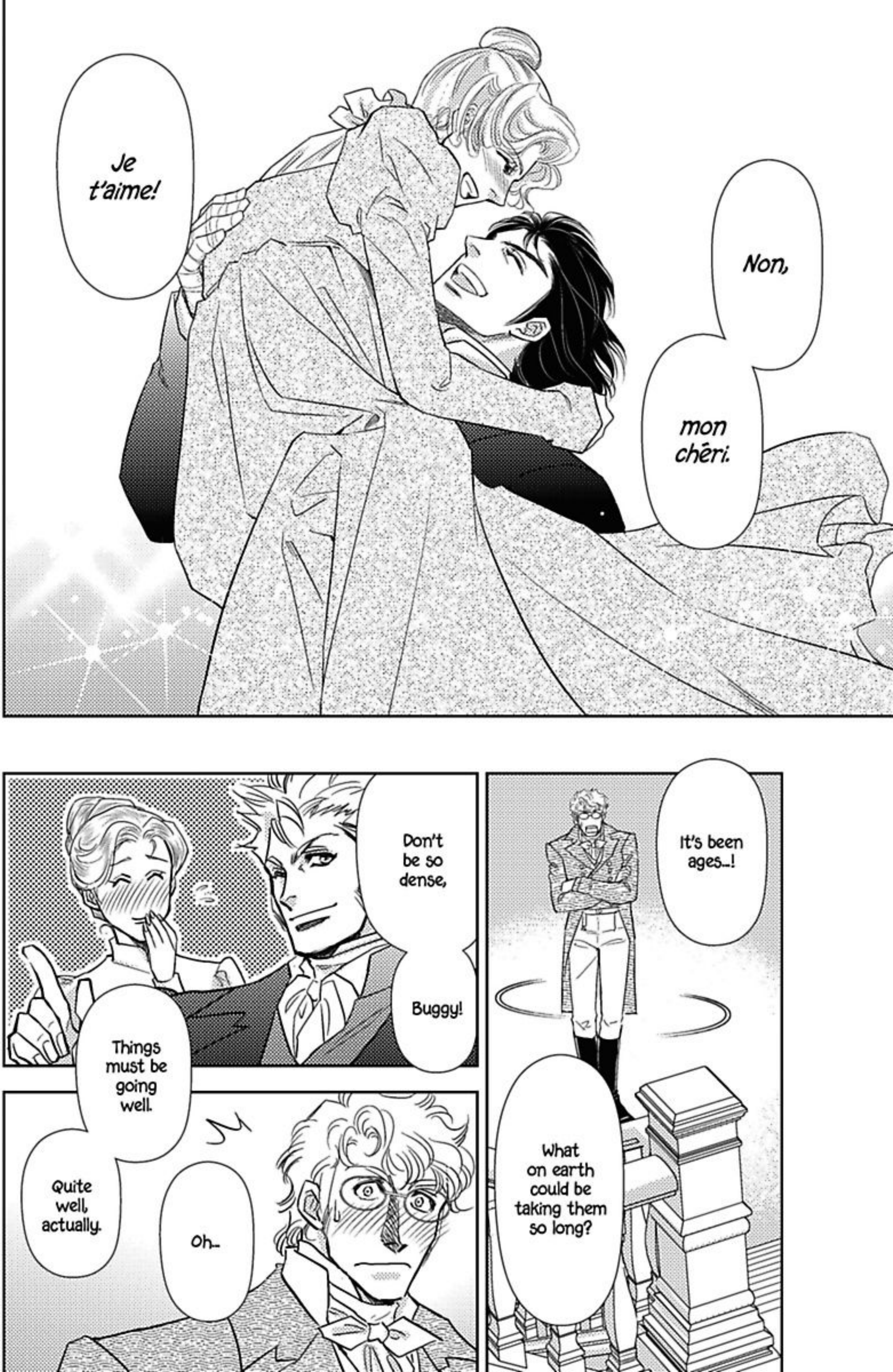



Will you marry me,
Juliette Bergerine?
Of course, as far as the rest of the world knows, we're already engaged...


But...
I'm not really your cousin, and–
Biologically speaking, of course!
Scholar
Perfect!
According to Buggy, it's best to avoid marriage between cousins, anyway.
I'm a Frenchwoman.
Your accent makes that perfectly clear.
The English hate the French.
I might end up causing trouble for you...


I am Sir Douglas Drury,
the man known in Old Bailey as the tiger of the courtroom. With no more than a sharp look, I can make a criminal confess on the spot.
No matter who I marry, it won't do any damage to my career.
...
Of course, if you insist on setting up shop as a seamstress,
I could just as well give up my job and go with you to France.
Simply put, you won't inconvenience me.
...


No...
There's no need for that.
If we're getting married, I'll have an awful lot of sewing to do for you and the baby!
The baby...?
You seem to be trying to seduce me...
Oui
monsieur.
Shall I stop?

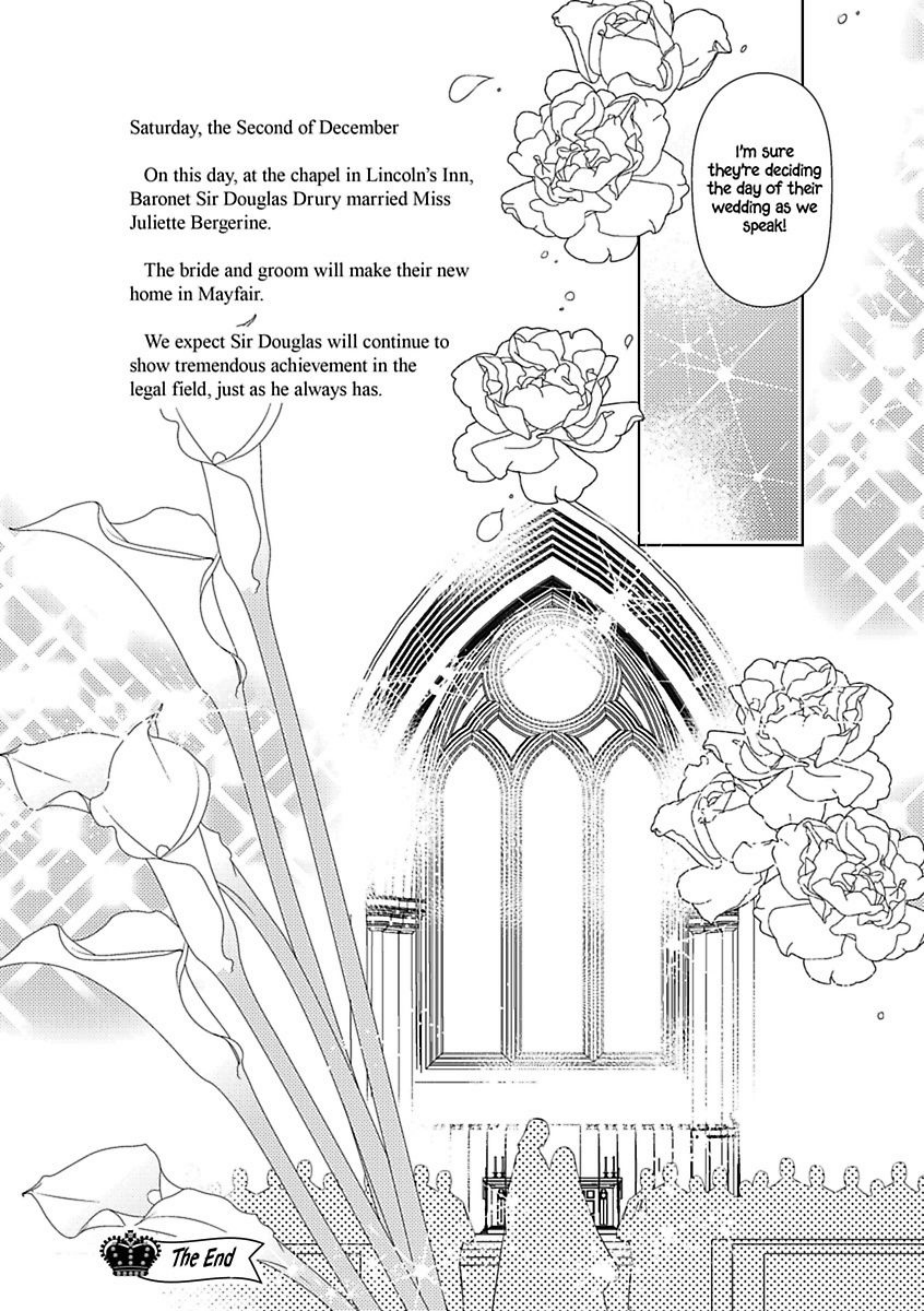

Je t'aime!
Non, mon chêri.
It's been ages...!
What on earth could be taking them so long?
Don't be so dense, Buggy!
Things must be going well.
Quite well, actually.
Oh...

Saturday, the Second of December

On this day, at the chapel in Lincoln's Inn, Baronet Sir Douglas Drury married Miss Juliette Bergerine.

The bride and groom will make their new home in Mayfair.

We expect Sir Douglas will continue to show tremendous achievement in the legal field, just as he always has.


I'm sure they're deciding the day of their wedding as we speak!
The End

A Lover's Kiss

Art by: Yoko Iwasaki © 2017
Original novel by: Margaret Moore
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